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Seventieth session

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Sixth Committee

Summary record of the 30th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 13 June 2016, at 12.15 p.m.

Chair: Mr. Charles (Trinidad and Tobago)

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The meeting was called to order at 12.15 p.m.

Expression of condolence in connection with the recent terrorist attack in the United States of America

1. **The Chair**, on behalf of the members of the Committee, expressed condolences to the families of the victims and the Government and people of the United States in connection with the recent terrorist attack in Florida. In the wake of the tragedy, the Committee should reflect on its continued failure to adopt a comprehensive convention on terrorism, which he expected would receive more urgent attention in the seventy-first session.

2. He hoped that the new approaches developed during the seventieth session would be adopted in the following session.

Agenda item 5: Election of the officers of the Main Committees

3. In accordance with rules 99 and 103 of the rules of procedure, the meeting had been convened for the purpose of electing the Chair and other members of the Bureau of the Committee for the seventy-first session of the General Assembly.

4. The nomination of Mr. Danon (Israel) for the office of Chair had been endorsed by the Group of Western European and Other States.

5. **Mr. Alyemany** (Yemen) expressed sympathy to the Government of the United States in connection with the terrorist attack in Orlando.

6. Speaking on behalf of the Group of Arab States, he said that the Group had sent a letter to the President of the General Assembly on 9 June protesting the endorsement by the Group of Western European and Other States of a candidate from Israel for the office of Chair. The Group of Arab States therefore requested that the election should be conducted by secret ballot, in accordance with rule 103 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, allowing it to record its categorical rejection of the nomination and prevent the Israeli candidate from being elected by consensus.

7. **The Chair** said that he had received a letter dated 10 June 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Yemen in his capacity as Chair of the Group of Arab States requesting that the election of Chair be held by

secret ballot, in accordance with rule 103 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

8. **Mr. Awad** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that his delegation wished to request a secret ballot and rejected the nomination of Israel, which was being proposed in order to strengthen the position of a country operating as an occupying power in the region. All United Nations decisions concerning the Arab-Israeli conflict showed Israel to be an occupying force. It would be impossible for Israel to combat international terrorism given its occupation of the Golan Heights. He wondered how the Committee could be chaired by a State whose actions went against the rules of the Organization and its Charter. Israel had not met the requirements set down in the resolutions governing its admission to the Organization and its conduct as a Member State and should not be allowed to chair a Committee until it had demonstrated a commitment to implementing those resolutions and ending its occupation of Arab territories.

9. **Mr. Alotaibi** (Kuwait), speaking on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, said that the selection of Israel as candidate for Chair was unacceptable and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation rejected the nomination as a matter of principle and protocol. As an occupying power, Israel was unqualified to chair the Sixth Committee, whose work in numerous issues of international and humanitarian law required a candidate that supported the effective operation of the United Nations and did not display flagrant contempt for international law, including humanitarian and human rights law. Israel continued to deny the rights of the Palestinian people and perpetrate systematic and gross violations in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem. Candidates that undermined the credibility of the United Nations and deliberately obstructed the implementation of its resolutions should be considered invalid by the General Assembly. The nomination of a candidate that egregiously violated the fundamental rules and norms of international law and United Nations resolutions was viewed as provocative and offensive. The regional groups had a responsibility to put forth qualified candidates for such important offices. The Organization of Islamic Cooperation viewed the nomination of Israel as contrary to the spirit and good faith required for the proper functioning of the Committee and reaffirmed its rejection of the nomination of Israel for the office of Chair.

10. **The Chair** invited the Committee to elect by secret ballot a Chair from the Western European and Other States.

11. *At the invitation of the Chair, Mr. Gallhofer (Austria), Mr. Luna (Brazil), Ms. Benešová (Czech Republic), Mr. Arrocha Olabuenaga (Mexico), Ms. Song Miyoung (Republic of Korea) and Mr. Joyini (South Africa) acted as tellers.*

12. *A vote was taken by secret ballot.*

<i>Number of ballot papers:</i>	189
<i>Invalid ballots:</i>	14
<i>Number of valid ballots:</i>	175
<i>Abstentions:</i>	23
<i>Number of members voting:</i>	152
<i>Required majority:</i>	77
<i>Number of votes obtained:</i>	
Mr. Danon (Israel)	109
Mr. Skoog (Sweden)	10
Ms. Boura (Greece)	4
Mr. Cardi (Italy)	4
Mr. Çevik (Turkey)	4
Ms. Lucas (Luxembourg)	4
Ms. Bird (Australia)	3
Mr. Pedersen (Norway)	2
Mr. Petersen (Denmark)	2
Mr. Blanchard (Canada)	1
Mr. Donoghue (Ireland)	1
Mr. Grima (Malta)	1
Mr. Gunnarsson (Iceland)	1
Mr. Kickert (Austria)	1
Mr. Mendonça e Moura (Portugal)	1
Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi (Spain)	1
Mr. Sauer (Finland)	1
Mr. van Bohemen (New Zealand)	1
Ms. Vives Balmaña (Andorra)	1

13. *Having obtained the required majority, Mr. Danon (Israel) was elected Chair.*

14. **The Chair** said that general statements and the election of the remaining officers would be postponed in the interest of saving time.

The meeting rose at 2 p.m.