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Chair: Mr. Pindják (Vice-Chair). (Slovakia)

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In the absence of Mr. Bahr Aluloom (Iraq), Mr. Pindják (Slovakia), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Agenda item 51: Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories (*continued*) [A/74/192](#), [A/74/219](#), [A/74/356](#), [A/74/357](#) and [A/74/468](#)

1. **Mr. Umar** (Nigeria) said that the consolidation and expansion of Israeli settlements in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, would have an adverse impact on the Middle East peace process, as they affected the viability of a future sovereign Palestinian State. The prospects for a two-State solution were being undermined by the deteriorating political, security, humanitarian and human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

2. His delegation urged Israel to end its demolitions, forced evictions and the denial of freedom of movement of Palestinians in the occupied territories, which, coupled with the threat of violence from Israeli settlers, infringed on the Palestinians' right to life, liberty and security. It called on Israel to halt and reverse all settlement development and related activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, as well as the occupied Syrian Golan, in compliance with United Nations resolutions, including Security Council resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#). It also called on Israel to cease the expansion of settlements, which were changing the character, status and demographic composition of the affected territories. Freezing the settlements was essential to enabling Israel and Palestine to coexist peacefully as viable, independent States.

3. The alarming humanitarian situation in Palestine, particularly the near collapse of infrastructure in the Gaza Strip as a result of the Israeli blockade and military action, should be of grave concern to the international community. His delegation called on Israel to end the blockade and to restore the freedom of movement of people and goods. It also called on Israel, Palestine and other Arab States in the region to work together to achieve a two-State solution, based on the pre-1967 borders, with Israel and Palestine existing side by side in peace, and with their respective capitals in Jerusalem.

4. **Mr. Elhomosany** (Egypt) said that it was regrettable that, since the establishment of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories in 1968, the situation in the

Occupied Palestinian Territory and the occupied Syrian Golan had continued to deteriorate. The horizon was receding for a solution to the Palestinian question in accordance with United Nations resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative, all of which emphasized the need for a Palestinian State based on the 4 June 1967 borders, with Jerusalem as its capital. Similarly, there was little hope that security and stability would return to the occupied Syrian Golan. Egregious Israeli practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, such as settlement expansion, home demolitions, confiscation and destruction of Palestinian property, separation of the city of Jerusalem from the surrounding Arab territory, repeated raids on the Haram al-Sharif and the embargo against the Gaza Strip, had all intensified.

5. In its report ([A/74/356](#)), the Special Committee expressed grave concerns regarding the detention, interrogation, killing and wounding of children during demonstrations, even though in most cases those children did not seem to pose an imminent threat to Israeli forces. Education was also under threat in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, with schools being hit by air strikes and demolished. To make matters worse, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) was undergoing a fiscal crisis that limited its ability to provide basic services to refugees.

6. The occupied Syrian Golan fared no better. Despite the adoption of Security Council resolution [497 \(1981\)](#), in which the Council noted that the occupied Syrian Golan remained occupied territory under international law, the situation had continued to deteriorate. The Special Committee had expressed concern regarding plans to expand settlements in the occupied Syrian Golan as well as the holding of local elections despite their lack of legitimacy under international law. Egypt supported the recommendations contained in the Special Committee's report and hoped that they would be implemented immediately so that the Palestinian and Syrian peoples could enjoy a minimum standard of human rights. Egypt also looked forward to the day when it would see peace in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and occupied Syrian Golan through the implementation of United Nations resolutions.

7. **Mr. Bromberg** (Israel) said that it was regrettable that the United Nations, which presented itself as a global beacon of values such as integrity and impartiality, was the host of a long-running spectacle, a charade, in which Israel continued to be blamed for the problems of the Middle East. Israel had been accused of not complying with the more than 100 resolutions that had been passed by the United Nations on the Israel-Palestine question. However, the real purpose of those

resolutions, which built upon each other and were self-referencing, was to cast his country in a poor light and to perpetuate the Palestinian narrative of victimhood. Having failed in 1947 to erase the State of Israel by force, the Palestinians had since been pursuing the same goal in the United Nations. The very name of the Special Committee was prejudicial, suggesting that his country was the root and only cause of the human rights situation in the region, although the situation was far more complex than that.

8. Regarding the Palestinian claim of occupation, supported by the work of the Fourth Committee, it was worth recalling that Judea and Samaria, or, the West Bank, had been under the control of the British Mandate before May 1948. Following the departure of the British, it was the Arab Legion of Jordan that had crossed the international border and taken control of the area. In other words, the area had gone from being under the mandatory control of Great Britain to the control of Jordan, which had acquired it following its illegal invasion of Israel, which had never been recognized as legitimate. It was explicitly stated in the Jordanian-Israeli General Armistice Agreement of April 1949 that the demarcation line, known as the Green Line, had been established for military purposes only, “without prejudice to future territorial settlements or boundary lines”. Therefore, when Israel had taken control of the West Bank in 1967, it had not crossed an agreed or accepted international border. The West Bank had not been taken from any Palestinian sovereign entity, as one did not exist at that time, or rather, at any point in time. It had been taken from the aggressor by the self-defender.

9. His delegation was dismayed to note that 72 years since the United Nations acknowledged the existence of Israel in General Assembly resolution 181 (II), a decision which the Arab population of the region had rejected, not much had changed. Despite their claim to the contrary, as expressed in various formal statements, the Palestinians had not really acknowledged the right of the Jewish people to self-determination and their right to be present in their homeland. All the formal statements made by the Palestinian Authority in the United Nations were indeed meaningless because Palestinian children were raised on ignorance and animosity in an education system that did not acknowledge the very legitimacy of his country’s basic right to exist.

10. If the Fourth Committee was truly interested in the human rights of the Palestinians, it would do well to address the roles of all the actors involved. Indeed, those rights were infringed upon daily by the Palestinian Authority, which was ranked 109th on the World

Democracy Index, and Hamas, the terrorist organization that had been in de facto control of Gaza since 2007. Hamas diverted humanitarian goods destined for civilians and prioritized its political and military interests over the welfare and safety of the people of Gaza. Over the previous three days, more than 360 rockets had been fired at Israel from the Gaza Strip, forcing some 2 million Israeli civilians into bomb shelters. More than 1,000 rockets had been launched over the previous year. It had been stated in a report referenced by the Committee that the attacks could be considered a war crime, which might amount to crimes against humanity. Unfortunately, even that simple, obvious fact was missing from the draft resolution before the Fourth Committee. By firing rockets from houses and schools, Palestinian militants deliberately placed Palestinian civilians at risk, knowing that Israel would do all in its power to avoid civilian casualties in its responses. The attempt by the Palestinians to portray the aggressors as victims had no place in civilized discourse.

11. Israel had always stated that it did not wish to control the Palestinians. Every offer it had made to end the conflict, each involving significant concessions, had been rejected or ignored by the Palestinians. The disputed issues between the two sides could be resolved only through direct negotiations. Unilateral attempts to predetermine the results of negotiations or to bypass negotiations through multilateral or international institutions that had one-sided agendas were doomed to fail. Member States should demand an end to the Special Committee’s mandate, which was counterproductive.

12. **Mr. Koba** (Indonesia) said that the credibility of the Special Committee and its report was not in doubt. The occupying Power continued to violate international law through demolitions, the blocking of humanitarian assistance and the excessive use of force throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The spread of illegal settlements, in violation of Security Council resolutions, in particular resolution 2334 (2016), was a key driver of human rights violations and must stop. His delegation was alarmed by the rise in the rate of demolition of Palestinian structures in the West Bank, including in East Jerusalem, in 2019, and by growing settler violence. As settlements expanded, the humanitarian and socioeconomic situation throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory continued to deteriorate and efforts to bring about a lasting two-State solution were being jeopardized. The blockade of Gaza, where poverty was deepening and the rate of unemployment was among the highest in the world, must be lifted.

13. His delegation condemned the use of excessive force by Israel in the West Bank and Gaza. Israel should

implement Security Council resolution 2334 (2016), comply with the 2004 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice in the case concerning the *Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory*, fulfil its obligations under international humanitarian law and be held accountable for its illegal actions. His delegation condemned all violations of international law, but the actions of the Palestinians, often a result of frustration, could hardly be compared with the grave violations carried out by the occupying Power. To do so was to distort the facts. Without a political solution on the basis of the two-State vision, nothing would change. The work of the Special Committee and other United Nations mechanisms to uphold the rights of the Palestinian people had become more relevant than ever.

14. **Mr. Sahraei** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that his delegation was disturbed by the horrible findings contained in the report of the Special Committee (A/74/356) and reaffirmed its support for the Special Committee's mandate. The Israeli occupation of Palestinian land lay at the heart of all the conflicts in the Middle East. The Israeli regime continued to violate the fundamental human rights and dignity of the Palestinian people and other Arabs living under its occupation. As a result of its brutal policies and practices, Palestinians were being deprived of their land and properties, forcibly evicted from their homes and denied access to essential services. They were subjected to violence, trespassing, harassment and intimidation by Israeli settlers. By its "one Jewish State" approach, the occupying Power negated the right of Palestinians to self-determination. It was also accelerating the "Judaization" of Jerusalem and altering or eliminating the Palestinian Christian and Muslim presence in the Holy City. The unlawful and dangerous position that had been adopted by the United States with regard to the status of Al-Quds Al-Sharif and the occupied Golan had further emboldened Israel in its violation of international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions and decisions.

15. The illegal and inhumane blockade of Gaza must be lifted and all practices amounting to collective punishment, including restrictions on freedom of movement across the Occupied Palestinian Territory, the demolition of homes, the revocation of residency rights and the closure of towns, must be stopped. His country condemned the continued expansion of illegal settlements and confiscation of land in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and in the occupied Syrian Golan. The Syrian Golan was an integral part of the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic. All discriminatory and illegal policies applied to the Syrian population, the presence

of Israeli army bases in and around Syrian residential and civilian areas and the construction and expansion of settlements constituted a flagrant violation of international law, the Charter of the United Nations, relevant United Nations resolutions and the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War (Fourth Geneva Convention).

16. The United Nations, in particular the General Assembly, had a vital role to play in resolving the Palestinian crisis. His Government continued to support the Palestinian people in resisting the occupation and in their quest to exercise their inalienable right to self-determination and establish a sovereign Palestinian State with Al-Quds as its capital.

17. **Mr. Mohsin** (Pakistan) said that Palestinians in the Occupied Palestinian Territory were denied their fundamental rights, including the right to freedom of movement and assembly. Even children were subject to arbitrary arrest and detention. Entire communities were being forcibly evicted as illegal settlement activity and demographic reengineering continued, and the illegal and inhuman siege of Gaza continued unabated. The aim of such tactics was to obliterate the identity of peoples and erase their ties to their homeland. In that respect, the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory was almost identical to that in Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir, where the illegal Indian occupation had persisted for more than 70 years. As in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, arbitrary arrests and administrative detention, including of children, were the norm. Since its attempted annexation of Jammu and Kashmir on 5 August 2019, India had put the occupied territory in lockdown, turning it into the largest open-air prison in the world.

18. UNRWA played a critical role in providing education, health and social services to more than 5 million Palestinian refugees and served as a vehicle for political stability and social cohesion in its areas of operation. His Government was therefore in favour of extending the Agency's mandate until June 2023. Resolution of the Palestinian issue was key to achieving lasting peace in the Middle East. The international community could not afford to remain silent while Palestinians continued to suffer, and their dream of a homeland withered before their eyes.

19. **Ms. Samai** (Algeria) said that for decades, the Security Council had adopted resolutions on the Palestinian issue and the Arab-Israeli conflict in which it had repeatedly called for an end to the occupation, but those calls had gone unheeded. Israel, the occupying Power, continued its aggressive and oppressive policies against the Palestinians, systematically violated their

holy places and persisted in expanding settlements, flouting international norms and rejecting peace. While thwarting all initiatives aimed at revitalizing the moribund peace process, Israel had recklessly escalated its provocations with a view to creating new facts on the ground and undermining the agreed international reference points. As documented in the report of the Special Committee (A/74/356), Israel had continued its illegal embargo on Gaza and had destroyed property, confiscated land, used excessive force against Palestinians, exploited Palestinian natural resources, carried out extra-judicial killings and abused detainees, including children, who were held indefinitely without charge. Those acts were clear violations of international human rights law, international humanitarian law and United Nations resolutions.

20. Her delegation was greatly concerned by the situation in the occupied Palestinian and Arab territories, in particular the rising violence, racism, illegal raids on historical religious sites, the dwindling prospects for restoring the inalienable rights of the Palestinians and the lack of accountability for all those phenomena. The Palestinian Nakbah had been ongoing for over 70 years because influential actors were content merely to manage the crisis without making genuine attempts to resolve it.

21. Accordingly, her delegation called on the international community, particularly the Security Council, to provide the necessary protection to the Palestinian people in accordance with the Fourth Geneva Convention and General Assembly resolution ES-10/20, and to implement the recommendations of the Secretary-General in his report on the implementation of that resolution. Breaking the long-standing peace process stalemate would require the political will of international actors to compel Israel, the occupying Power, to respect United Nations resolutions, end the occupation, halt its expansionist settlement policy, lift the unjust embargo on the Gaza Strip and end all forms of collective punishment and violations of the basic rights of the Palestinians.

22. Algeria reiterated its unwavering support for the just cause of the Palestinian people. It hoped that the United Nations would uphold its historic responsibilities and support the right of the Palestinians to establish an independent State based on the 4 June 1967 borders with Jerusalem as its capital, and to resolve all final-status issues in line with United Nations resolutions, the Arab Peace Initiative and the two-State solution.

23. **Mr. El Mezouaghi** (Morocco) said that his delegation called on Israel to cease its violence against the defenceless Palestinian people, its policies regarding

settlements and home demolitions, and its flagrant violations of international law, the Fourth Geneva Convention and international humanitarian law. Furthermore, any attempts by Israel to undermine the legal and historical status of Jerusalem should be rejected. To that end, the Government of Morocco had undertaken a number of initiatives in support of the residents of Jerusalem. One such initiative, the “Jerusalem Appeal”, had been launched by the King of Morocco and Pope Francis, both stressing the importance of maintaining the multi-confessional character of Jerusalem and of ensuring that the followers of the three monotheistic religions were able to freely access its holy sites. Morocco had also announced new joint initiatives with Jordan aimed at protecting Jerusalem from attempts to alter its legal and political status or its Islamic and Christian character.

24. The Bayt Mal al-Quds al-Sharif Agency, the executive field arm of the Al-Quds Committee chaired by the King of Morocco, had continued to carry out its mission of protecting Jerusalem and fostering the resilience of its people. Despite limited funds, which came primarily from voluntary individual contributions and States members of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and other institutions, the Agency’s rate of success had made it one of the most important institutions working in Jerusalem. The Government of Morocco had announced that it would provide the Agency with funds and would send Moroccan architects and artisans to help restore areas of the Aqsa Mosque complex. In 2018, the Agency had spent \$3.7 million on projects related to social assistance, the protection of the cultural and architectural heritage of Jerusalem and the conservation of Palestinian national archives. Approximately 2,000 needy families in Jerusalem had benefited from Moroccan-funded social assistance programmes and summer camps. Morocco had also provided scholarships to over 100 individuals for study at Palestinian universities and Moroccan institutes of higher learning.

25. Morocco reiterated its support for the efforts of UNRWA to alleviate the suffering of refugees by providing basic services, particularly in education and health care, and called on donor countries to maintain their financial support for the Agency. Morocco commended Jordan for the vital role it played by welcoming Palestinian refugees and for its prudent policy of allowing them to exercise their rights on an equal footing with other Jordanians.

26. The international community must help find a way to break the stalemate that had prevailed since the breakdown of negotiations between the Israelis and the Palestinians, and do its utmost to bring both sides back

to the negotiating table. Good-faith negotiations based on United Nations resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative would restore trust between the parties and lead to the establishment of a viable and sustainable Palestinian State existing alongside Israel in peace and security.

27. **Mr. Moncada** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that Israel continued to violate basic provisions of international law and the human rights of the Palestinian people with impunity, in violation of many United Nations resolutions, including Security Council resolution 242 (1967), in which the Council had urged Israel to withdraw from the occupied territories. The expansion of settlements and related violations of international humanitarian law had condemned the Palestinian people to a life of isolation and poverty. His Government was concerned about the growing violence in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and clashes between the Israeli occupation forces and Palestinian demonstrators in the West Bank. Israel was stoking tensions by confiscating land and property, demolishing homes, restricting the free movement of people and continuing to build and expand illegal settlements, all of which stood in the way of relaunching negotiations to end the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Coupled with settler violence and violations of human rights, those acts, the aim of which was to modify the legal, geographical and demographic makeup of the occupied territories, were carried out with impunity and nullified the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination.

28. Everything must be done to prevent an escalation of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, which could have unforeseen consequences for the region and the world, and to achieve just and lasting peace. The Security Council must do more to ensure that the obligations set forth in the Charter of the United Nations were met. The withdrawal of the occupying Power, an end to the blockade of Gaza, the return of refugees to Palestinian land and the definitive creation of a Palestinian State were all key conditions for ending the conflict.

29. His Government opposed any measures designed to alter the status of Jerusalem, including the decision by some Governments to move their embassies from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. It also opposed any legal steps taken by the occupying Power, such as the adoption of the nation-State law, that instituted apartheid and ethnic discrimination against Palestinian citizens of Israel and Palestinian residents of Jerusalem. His country fully supported the Palestinian people as they strove to achieve their inalienable rights and satisfy their legitimate national aspirations, including self-determination, freedom and the establishment of an

independent sovereign State of Palestine based on the pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

30. **Mr. Viera Salazar** (Ecuador) said that his delegation shared the concerns expressed by the Secretary-General in his report on Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem (A/74/468) about the excessive use of force by Israeli security forces, especially in Gaza. Particularly troubling was the fact that, of the 218 Palestinians who had died at the hands of the security forces, most of them in the context of law enforcement operations, 48 had been children, 3 persons with disabilities and 3 health-care workers.

31. His delegation urged all United Nations bodies to mobilize support and assistance for the Palestinian people and Member States to increase their contributions to UNRWA to ensure that it was adequately funded to carry out its mandate. The Security Council should take concrete action to assist the Palestinians, taking into account the socioeconomic costs of the occupation, the application of laws under which Palestinians were stripped of their land, citizenship, freedom of expression, the opportunity to participate in political life, and the resources needed to lead a life in dignity. His Government supported the rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination in a State free of foreign occupation. In that regard, it hoped that the next elections to be held in the State of Palestine would be free and fair, and thereby contribute to peace. It also called for tangible progress to be made towards a peaceful, definitive and just solution to the conflict, on the basis of the coexistence of two States.

32. **Ms. Flitti** (League of Arab States) said that the defenceless Palestinian civilian population remained subject to violence, terror, loss of property and income and other violations of international law and international humanitarian law. The League of Arab States condemned all actions by Israeli forces on occupied Arab lands, including in the occupied Syrian Golan.

33. The peoples of Palestine and the Golan were angry and frustrated because despite repeated condemnations, no concrete progress had been made towards the realization of their inalienable rights, including their right to self-determination. They were the only two peoples still struggling against brutal occupation, living with violence, persecution, instability, insecurity and dwindling prospects for a dignified life. The issue of ending colonialism in all its forms, the most important aspect of the Fourth Committee's work, had lain at the heart of the Palestinian question for over 70 years of

Israeli imperialism. Bargaining over that subject had no place in constructive dialogue. Rather, discussions should focus on the recognition of and commitment to relevant United Nations resolutions and decisions, particularly the partial and flawed implementation of General Assembly resolution 181 (II). The fact that only the State of Israel had received international recognition contravened the letter and spirit of that resolution, in which the Assembly had called for the establishment of a Palestinian State. The failure to implement the resolution had become a major concern for Arab peoples and their Governments and a driver of regional crises, despite the presence of instruments that could help move the question forward, including Security Council resolution 2234 (2016).

34. Delaying the implementation of those resolutions was to delay Palestinian statehood itself and would lead to further suffering. It would also prolong the work of the Committee pending the end of the occupation of all Palestinian and Arab land. The international community was committed to the legitimacy of the Palestinian question and supported the role of the United Nations as the legitimate guardian of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. It must therefore maintain the momentum on the question and prevent new facts from being imposed illegally on the ground through the systematic expansion of settlements on occupied Arab territories, or through demolitions, expulsions, embargos, illegal detentions and the intentional killing of defenceless Palestinians, particularly children.

35. The international community must renew its commitment to the five principal final-status issues and resolve the conflict through the establishment of a Palestinian State based on the 4 June 1967 borders with Jerusalem as its capital, in accordance with the Arab Peace Initiative, the two-State solution and the Quartet road map. Peace in the region would only prevail if the Palestinian and Israeli peoples were granted the full right to live in dignity, peace and security within their respective borders.

36. The League of Arab States rejected all illegal attempts by the occupying Power to impose new facts on the ground and to exploit the natural resources of Palestinians, thereby depriving them of their right to sovereignty and to development. The unilateral decision to “Judaize” Jerusalem or to declare it the capital of Israel would only exacerbate and prolong the conflict and continue to inflame tensions in the region. The only way to end the conflict was through the return of both sides to the negotiating table.

Statements made in exercise of the right of reply

37. **Mr. Shaddad** (Jordan) said that his delegation did not wish to enter into a dispute on the wars of 1948 or 1967, or on the situation in the West Bank. United Nations resolutions were clear with respect to the status of the occupied Arab territories, and that status could not be changed on a whim. There was also an international consensus regarding the non-recognition of Israeli sovereignty over the Occupied Palestinian Territory or other occupied Arab territories, a consensus that had been clearly reflected in the international reaction to the announcement of the intention to annex the Jordan Valley and the northern Dead Sea to the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The international position on the continuation of the settlement policy in the Occupied Palestinian Territory was also clear. Jordan hoped to see a sovereign Palestinian State based on the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, living in peace and security alongside Israel. Israel, as a State Member of the United Nations, was obliged to respect the relevant resolutions of the Organization.

38. **Mr. Bromberg** (Israel) said that his country ranked 30th on the World Democratic Index. While Israel was not perfect, it continued to bring up its citizens with democratic values that were inherent in the very nature of the country itself. In Israel, Palestinians were able to exercise their right to approach the Supreme Court and argue that they were victims of injustice. Israeli non-governmental organizations were free to support Palestinian causes. The country had always kept its democratic core virtuous and honest, despite the numerous wars and difficulties it faced. The attempt to undermine the democratic nature of Israel was sinister and false. The comments made about Haram-al-Sharif or Temple Mount and accusations made about the so-called Israeli attempt to “Judaize” Jerusalem were ludicrous. The genuine reason behind those comments and accusations was that the Palestinians were attempting to sever the Jewish ties to the city. That point was proven by the very fact that the Temple Mount was referred to in the draft resolution being considered by the Committee only by its name in Arabic. His delegation did not object to the use of both the Arabic and the Hebrew names, but the Palestinians objected because their discourse and actions were an attempt to politicize history.

39. Many delegations, especially the Arab delegations, had made repeated references to the word “justice” and the need to seek a just solution, but their view of justice was partial, to say the least. It disregarded the role of the initiators of the aggressions before, during and after the 1948 war. Their aim was to prevent the Jews from seeking out a right to self-

determination anywhere on their land. They disregarded their own historical responsibilities for the plight of the people, because had the Palestinian Arabs accepted the 1947 partition plan, as the Jews had, not a single Palestinian would have become a refugee. They disregarded the Arab hostilities against the Jews that had led, during the same war, to the killing of 1 per cent of the entire Jewish population in the land and to the expulsion of at least 850,000 Jewish refugees from Arab countries. Stripped of their rights, dignity and property, those refugees had not had a United Nations relief and works agency or a special committee to investigate the status of their human rights, nor had they had a Fourth Committee to adopt resolutions on their behalf. Indeed, of those 850,000 refugees, none was currently a refugee. They had all been resettled in Israel or elsewhere, in Europe and in North America, but were still deprived of their property and still denied historical justice. Although they were direct victims of the Arab-Israeli conflict, their plight was utterly disregarded by the United Nations. That was not the true face of justice; justice was not the domain of one party alone.

40. The Jews were a minority in the world and a minority at the United Nations. There was only one place in the world where discussions in parliament were held in Hebrew; there was only one place in the world where the Sabbath was the official day of rest; and there was only place in the world where Jews could be a majority and exercise self-determination.

41. Israel, like any other nation, yearned for justice and lasting peace, but justice, unlike the one-sided resolutions of the Fourth Committee, was not decided by the number of votes, and would not be served by the so-called return of millions of Palestinians to Israel, rendering the Jews a minority in another Arab State and thus stripping them of the right to self-determination. Justice would not be achieved by continuing to disregard the plight of the Jewish refugees from Arab States. A just solution could only be based on genuine mutual respect for direct and bilateral negotiations.

42. **Ms. Abdelhady-Nasser** (Observer for the State of Palestine) said that her delegation rejected the multiple distortions and blatant falsehoods made by the representative of Israel, who had openly ridiculed the efforts of the Fourth Committee to address the grave violations of international law committed by Israel, the occupying Power, in direct disparagement and contempt of Member States. The international community should not remain silent while Israel cynically mocked international law and United Nations resolutions and belittled the Committee's serious deliberations and appeals, including with repeated offensive allegations and propaganda, even stating that the occupation was a

claim, whereas it was a fact witnessed by the entire world in all its inhumanity, brutality and cruelty. The number of Palestinian children who had lost their lives in the few hours since the Committee's last meeting was another tragic testament to the occupation. Those children and the millions of Palestinians held captive under the illegal occupation had no shelter in which to hide and no place to which to escape from the savagery.

43. No delegation in the Committee was engaging in "Israel-bashing". The information contained in the reports before the Committee did not favour one side or the other; it did not convey opinions but rather well-known facts with abundant evidence, including some provided by principled Israeli human rights organizations such as B'Tselem, Peace Now and Yesh Din, all of which were coming under growing pressure from the Israeli authorities as they escalated their hostilities and punitive measures against human rights defenders. Nonetheless, those defenders continued to document and expose the countless violations and war crimes against the Palestinian people. Criticism of those crimes was not one-sided or prejudiced against Israel. It was based on international law. The criticism was about an occupation that had lasted for far too long and that violated every fundamental tenet and norm of international law, and that must end. It was about the deprivation and oppression of a people and the colonization and de facto annexation of their land.

44. It was the height of audacity that the representative of Israel referred to General Assembly resolution [181 \(II\)](#), by which the international community had decided to divide Palestine and create the State of Israel, when Israel continued to swallow up Palestinian land and impose its plan for a greater Israel settlement by settlement, settler by settler, one illegal military order or measure after another, destroying even the minimal prospect of a settlement based on the 1967 borders. The representative of Israel had also claimed that the Palestinian authorities did not recognize the right of Israel to self-determination. That was patently false, as Palestinian authorities had always recognized the right of Israel to exist. Israel, on the other hand, had never recognized the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination or the right of the State of Palestine to exist. Under its nation-State law, Israel had declared that the right to self-determination was for the Jewish people alone.

45. The representative of Israel had also belittled statements made in the Committee, describing them as a charade. Yet, those statements barely touched upon the dismal reality of Palestinian life under occupation. The long-term failure to hold Israel to account for its crimes had emboldened it in its derisive and dismissive

behaviour and cruelty towards the Palestinian people, as witnessed again recently with the slaughter of innocent Palestinian civilians, including women and children, in Gaza. Nothing in international law could ever justify the dehumanization, desperation and devastation being imposed on the Palestinian people, not even the need for security, which was not exclusive to Israel and was not a zero-sum game. It was therefore untrue that violence and security concerns had not been addressed in the Committee's resolutions on the Palestinian issue. They had been addressed repeatedly, in line with international law and not in line with the idea of might over right.

46. With regard to the standing of Israel as a democracy, she said that a democracy did not legislate and institutionalize discrimination against entire segments of its population; a democracy did not treat one part of its population as superior to all others, in total contradiction with the principle of equality among all human beings enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; a democracy did not behave as an extremist theocracy and did not act as an apartheid State; a democracy most definitely did not impose a foreign occupation for over half a century on another people, deliberately stripping them of their rights and even of their basic humanity.

47. Her delegation believed that the statements made under the current agenda item by many delegations, including on behalf of major groups, had sufficiently responded to the distortions by the Israeli delegation. Her delegation took heart from such principled statements and reaffirmations of the principles of international law and United Nations resolutions and of the obligations of the international community with regard to the question of Palestine. That support and solidarity remained invaluable for the Palestinian people as they continued the long journey towards realizing their rights, freedoms and, indeed, justice.

48. **Mr. Alqaisi** (Iraq) said that there was a clear and near unanimous consensus with regard to the violations against the Palestinian people, which had been ongoing for decades, including the use of military force against women and children. Israel had continued to violate the political, economic, social and cultural rights of the Palestinian people. The international community had a moral obligation to exert more pressure on Israel to halt its settlement expansion, as called for in endless United Nations resolutions. The International Court of Justice had also found that the construction of a wall in the Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, was a violation of international law. His delegation condemned and called for an end to all those Israeli violations. Journalists and humanitarian workers had difficulty gaining access to parts of the Occupied

Palestinian Territory. The latter, in particular, must be allowed access to any areas where they were needed.

49. **Mr. Bromberg** (Israel), reiterating his delegation's view that the Fourth Committee and the United Nations as a whole continued to show bias in favour of the Palestinians, said that in 2019 the General Assembly had rejected a resolution condemning the firing of rockets against the civilian population in Israel. That resolution should have been adopted by consensus in a platform that regarded itself as one that promoted world peace and protected the innocent. In all honesty, that resolution had been rejected solely because the shooting was being carried out by Palestinians and the Israelis had been on the receiving end.

50. In the previous two days, his countrymen had come under attack by a rain of rockets launched from Gaza. Yet, only a few representatives had had the decency or courage to condemn those attacks. All the others, some of whom represented countries that were among the worst human rights violators in the world, had taken it upon themselves to lecture his country about justice, about what was wrong or right for it. Different sets of rules and standards applied to Israelis and Palestinians in the United Nations. The ongoing discussion on the status of the Palestinians did not bring a just solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It only indulged the Palestinians in support of their narrative. The State of Israel was always prepared to negotiate and had already demonstrated its ability to compromise. It would not, however, under any circumstances, aid those who sought to discredit it as a nation.

Agenda item 52: Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects (*continued*)

51. **Ms. Plakalovic** (Serbia) said that reform was needed in peacekeeping missions, as their mandates had become increasingly complex, including not only peacekeeping but also conflict prevention, post-conflict reconstruction and long-term development. Her country welcomed the efforts of the Secretary-General to reform the United Nations peacebuilding architecture and was committed to strengthening the role and capacity of the Organization in keeping the peace, resolving disputes and preventing conflicts, particularly through early warning of potential crises and conflicts. It was vital to ensure that peacekeeping missions were properly financed and equipped, so that they could address shifting political and security challenges in the field effectively.

52. Serbia was committed to taking an active part in the system of collective security; the involvement of its

military personnel in United Nations peacekeeping operations was an important element of its foreign policy. It was committed to regional peace and security and was working with its partners to build the capacity of its military and other assets to participate in multinational operations. Currently, 259 Serbian soldiers, officers, police and other personnel were taking part in five United Nations and four European Union missions. Her country was the largest contributor in the Balkans to peacekeeping operations and ranked among the top 10 troop- and police-contributing countries in Europe.

53. Serbia also attached importance to United Nations peacekeeping missions owing to the presence in its territory of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo, established pursuant to Security Council resolution 1244 (1999), which played a key role in building and preserving long-term stability in Kosovo and Metohija. Given the complexity of the political and security situation in that province and the fact that its Serbian and other non-Albanian populations placed their trust primarily in the mission, it must remain engaged in all the issues relating to the implementation of resolution 1244 (1999).

54. **Mr. Viera Salazar** (Ecuador) said that peacekeeping operations must be conducted in accordance with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, in particular respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity, political independence and non-interference in the internal affairs of States, and in accordance with the guiding principles of such operations, namely consent of the parties, impartiality and the non-use of force, except in self-defence and in order to carry out the mandate of the operation. The growing complexity of peacekeeping mandates made it necessary to strengthen triangular cooperation between the Security Council, the Secretariat and troop- and police-contributing countries. Peacekeeping operations must be provided with the political, financial and logistical support necessary to carry out their mandates effectively. His country, which had taken part in peacekeeping operations since 1958, was strengthening the peacekeeping training unit of its armed forces to ensure that the troops it contributed to missions carried out their mandates efficiently.

55. Peace, stability, respect for human rights and governability were prerequisites for sustainable development. As women had a vital role to play in conflict prevention and resolution, more must be done to ensure their involvement in peacekeeping and in the promotion of peace and security. The Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations played an important role in making recommendations relating to

concepts and strategic policy on peacekeeping operations. The Action for Peacekeeping initiative and the related commitments made by States, together with the United Nations zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse, were key tools for the institutional strengthening of peacekeeping operations. His delegation paid tribute to the more than 3,800 military personnel, police officers and civilians who had lost their lives in peacekeeping operations.

56. **Mr. Wang Nian** (China) said that respect for the principles of sovereign equality, non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries and the peaceful settlement of disputes lay at the heart of all peacekeeping operations, for which it was essential always to obtain the consent of the host country and to focus on reaching a political settlement. The overarching role of the Security Council in peacekeeping operations needed to be reinforced. The mandates of such operations had to be realistic and feasible and include precise goals. Member States should provide adequate resources for those mandates in a timely manner and ensure their effective use. The aim of peacekeeping operations should be to create a safe and stable environment in the host country, to contribute to capacity-building and to lay the foundations for eradicating poverty and achieving sustainable development. Partnerships should be forged between host countries and troop- and police-contributing countries.

57. China supported the Action for Peacekeeping initiative and was playing a major role in related training and safety and security issues. It was the second largest contributor to the United Nations peacekeeping budget and paid its contributions unconditionally, in full and on time. It currently had more than 2,500 peacekeepers on active duty with eight peacekeeping missions. Since its inception, the Peace and Development Trust Fund, established following an agreement signed between the United Nations and the Government of the People's Republic of China, had contributed to capacity-building efforts in developing countries, the improvement of safety and security for United Nations peacekeepers and efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. China had also set up an 8,000-strong peacekeeping standby force.

58. **Archbishop Auza** (Observer for the Holy See) said that his delegation welcomed the recent focus on peacekeeping operations reflected in the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping initiative and its associated Declaration of Shared Commitments. The tasks of peacekeeping missions included conflict resolution and dialogue and the provision of support for lasting and inclusive political solutions. The success of

such missions depended on the commitment of all involved, whether demonstrated through the provision of troops and police officers or through the provision of financial contributions or support at the community level. Twenty years after the adoption of Security Council resolution 1265 (1999) on the protection of civilians in armed conflict and 70 years after the adoption of the four Geneva Conventions relating to the protection of victims of international armed conflicts, civilians continued to be targeted and to fall victim to indiscriminate attacks and accounted for the majority of casualties in conflict. Addressing that issue required an acknowledgement of the common humanity and inviolable and equal dignity of each person.

59. The Holy See welcomed the emphasis placed in the Declaration of Shared Commitments on the protection of children and women in peacekeeping operations, and the inclusion of child protection among the tasks of such missions. One in every six children around the world was affected by the violence of war or its effects, even when they were not enlisted as child soldiers or held hostage by armed groups. The protection of civilians and critical civilian infrastructure, such as schools and hospitals, should remain a priority in peacekeeping operations. While it was unrealistic to expect that United Nations peacekeeping missions could protect all civilians at all times, their presence should provide hope to communities burdened by war and extreme poverty. The international community should ensure that the missions were properly equipped, and the Security Council must match the missions' mandates to the magnitude and difficulties of the tasks facing them.

60. **Ms. Malouche** (International Organization of la Francophonie) said that the relative lack of French-speaking personnel deployed to the numerous peacekeeping missions in French-speaking countries remained a source of concern, although progress had been made with regard to the deployment of French-speaking police. The emphasis placed on language skills among peacekeepers in the Declaration of Shared Commitments was therefore welcome.

61. Her organization, whose members represented half of the top 20 countries contributing to United Nations peacekeeping operations, was working to develop a joint strategic position among French-speaking countries with regard to peacekeeping challenges, and to boost the number and quality of French-speaking countries participating in peacekeeping operations by supporting the development of didactic materials and training programmes in French for military, police and civilian personnel.

62. In that context, it had worked with France and the Department of Peace Operations to organize the fourth training course for military instructors involved in predeployment held in early 2019. It had also worked with the United Nations to organize a training seminar on troop planning and deployment for French-speaking army and police officers held in Djibouti in June 2019. It also planned to hold a training session on the cycle of engagement in peacekeeping operations for members of the permanent missions of French-speaking countries in New York by the end of 2019. Her organization was also supporting the development of French-language versions of guidance for troop- and police-contributing countries, materials for the UN-Women female military officers' course and Department of Peace Operations predeployment training manuals.

63. The implementation of the women and peace and security agenda was a priority for her organization, which shared the goal of increasing the number of women taking part in peacekeeping operations. Her organization was also working to strengthen multilingualism by fostering the use of French in peacekeeping operations. French-language capacity among personnel was a key to gaining the acceptance of local populations, especially in French-speaking countries, for peacekeeping missions, boosting the effectiveness of those missions and the international community's efforts in general, and ensuring the safety of personnel.

64. **Ms. Coutou** (International Committee of the Red Cross) said that the authority given to United Nations peacekeeping missions to use force, including deadly force, in order to protect civilians, which included stabilization tasks and the neutralization of security threats, had increased the likelihood of international humanitarian law being applied to peacekeeping operations and of the latter being designated as a party to an armed conflict under international law. United Nations forces must comply with international humanitarian law and international human rights law, and senior mission personnel must understand the rights and obligations of all parties, including their own.

65. The applicability of humanitarian law to multinational forces depended on the circumstances prevailing on the ground, irrespective of the international mandate assigned to such forces or the term used to designate the party or parties potentially opposing them. The determination of the legal framework applicable to peacekeeping operations was pivotal to defining the rules of engagement and the kind of training required by troop and police contingents. United Nations peacekeeping missions could, using the Human Rights Due Diligence Policy as a framework,

exercise their influence to restore respect for humanitarian law among parties to conflicts. At a time of enhanced partnership between the United Nations and the African Union, including on collective security arrangements, it was incumbent on States and international organizations to ensure that troops and police were adequately trained, equipped and instructed to ensure their compliance with international humanitarian law.

66. The principle of doing no harm must be at the heart of United Nations peacekeeping operations. Although mission personnel needed to maintain proximity to the populations they intended to protect, potential risks to individuals and communities arising from such contact needed to be weighed. Local communities should be consulted in a culturally sensitive manner, but helping them to enhance their self-protection mechanisms did not obviate the responsibility of the authorities to protect them. A suggestion for policymakers was to raise the ceiling for the police component in peacekeeping missions in order to enhance community engagement and the performance of law enforcement tasks. The commitment by the Secretariat and many troop- and police-contributing countries to increase the presence of women in peacekeeping would facilitate engagement with entire communities, including girls and women, and allow for a more relevant response to violations and threats.

67. The shrinking resources available to United Nations peacekeeping missions should be focused on operations, armed and unarmed, such as physical protection, which they were best placed to carry out. Unarmed activities to protect civilians were welcome but should complement, rather than substitute, armed interventions. In line with Security Council resolution [2286 \(2016\)](#), peacekeepers should do everything possible to ensure that the wounded and sick had safe access to health-care services, by maintaining security perimeters around health facilities at risk of attack, carrying out medical evacuations in an impartial manner, and not interrupting the delivery of medical services when searching health facilities as part their law enforcement or patrolling tasks.

68. To those ends, peacekeepers needed clear guidance, sound collaboration with humanitarian actors and adequate resources. Throughout Africa, staff of the International Committee of the Red Cross and volunteers of the Red Cross and Red Crescent had witnessed the human cost of the failure to protect but also the results of effective protective interventions by peacekeepers. The International Committee would continue to strengthen its cooperation with peacekeeping missions, troop- and police-contributing

countries and the Secretariat during predeployment and in-country activities.

The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.