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Seventy-seventh session

Official Records

**41<sup>st</sup>** plenary meeting  
Wednesday, 30 November 2022, 10 a.m.  
New York

*President:* Mr. Kőrösi ..... (Hungary)

*The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.*

## Agenda item 33

### Question of Palestine

**Report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (A/77/35)**

**Note by the Secretary-General (A/77/295)**

**Draft resolutions (A/77/L.23, A/77/L.24, A/77/L.25 and A/77/L.26)**

**The President** (*spoke in Arabic*): In 1947, the General Assembly assumed responsibility for finding a just solution to the Palestinian question. By adopting resolution 181 (II), an agreement was reached to establish two States living side by side in peace and security. To this day, we have yet to reach a comprehensive and lasting solution. That question remains on the General Assembly's agenda and on the minds of Palestinians, who are waiting to achieve their dream of establishing a sovereign and independent State.

(*spoke in English*)

With each passing day, their fate only grows more uncertain. In 1950, when the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) began its operations, it was responding to the needs of 750,000 people. Today there are nearly 6 million Palestine refugees registered under its mandate. I strongly commend UNRWA for providing vitally important assistance for the past 72 years to

Palestinians in desperate need. Yet the success of UNRWA is also a reminder that we, the international community, have come up short on finding a more sustainable solution, and that we have unfinished business to help resolve the conflict and meet the legitimate aspirations of Palestinians and Israelis alike.

(*spoke in Russian*)

During the high-level week, I followed closely the positive signals sent by the leaders of participating countries. The statements they made, which asserted that negotiations on the basis of the principle of two States are the best way to ensure the security of both Israelis and Palestinians and to ensure the prosperity of the entire region, were encouraging.

(*spoke in English*)

The only reasonable way forward is through direct dialogue, talks in good faith, respect for United Nations resolutions and building on previous agreements.

(*spoke in French*)

This conflict has placed a tremendous burden on both parties for a century. For four generations, it has caused immense suffering for Arabs and Jews, Palestinians and Israelis.

(*spoke in English*)

Countless innocent people on both sides have lost their lives to bullets and explosives, bombs and missiles. We know from experience that nothing drives violence more than despair. We have to break the vicious cycle of hatred and violence, for, as said by Mahatma Gandhi,

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an eye for an eye only ends up making the whole world blind. Let us give young people a reason for hope. We simply must help to shift the dynamics from disagreement to engagement.

*(spoke in Arabic)*

I urge Member States to create an environment conducive to bringing back the two-State solution. I would also like to call upon all parties to seek a negotiated solution based on the Charter of the United Nations, the principles of international law and respect for human rights.

*(spoke in English)*

At stake is not only peace in the region but also global confidence that the United Nations has what it takes to meet this challenge. Now, in the absence of a genuine political horizon, we can all agree that the work of UNRWA is essential. Yet that Agency, the mandate of which Member States renew year in and year out, continues to face a huge funding gap.

*(spoke in Russian)*

We all have a responsibility to take action to ensure that Palestinian aspirations for statehood are achieved and that Israel's security is guaranteed, so that UNRWA assistance is no longer necessary.

*(spoke in English)*

It is inspiring to know that the Middle East has tremendous human and economic resources and that there are historic and current precedents for cooperation. According to Nelson Mandela, if you want to make peace with your enemy, you have to work with your enemy; then he becomes your partner. The recent agreement on a permanent maritime boundary between Israel and Lebanon is a symbolic achievement that proves that good-faith negotiations are a way to success. It always seems impossible until it is done, as the old saying goes. Let us move beyond the default of distrust. Let us ask the hard questions. Let us focus on the common good. Let us finally resolve this conflict.

I now give the floor to Mr. Cheikh Niang, Permanent Representative of Senegal, in his capacity as Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, to introduce draft resolutions A/77/L.23, A/77/L.24, A/77/L.25 and A/77/L.26 and the Committee's report (A/77/35).

**Mr. Niang** (Senegal): Allow me first to thank you most warmly, Mr. President, for participating yesterday in the special meeting convened by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to observe the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People (see A/AC.183/PV.409). We thank you, Sir, for your very powerful statements yesterday and today. We thank all delegations for their active participation. We received messages of solidarity from many Heads of State and Government, intergovernmental organizations and civil society worldwide. We also received and heard messages from the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council, among other officials, which we deeply appreciate. The solidarity of all means a lot to the Palestinian people, and yesterday we heard an impassioned plea from a Palestinian human rights organization. The solidarity day observance, which is mandated by the General Assembly, presents an opportunity to renew our commitment to protect the rights of the Palestinian people and salvage the two-State solution.

The Committee continued to mobilize support for those rights and a two-State solution, whereby Israel and an independent State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, may live in peace and security. We knocked on many doors through the Committee's outreach efforts. We reached out to Member States, both in their capitals and through their permanent missions in New York, in order to have our outreach efforts promoted and to yield results. We also reached out to the Security Council, the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly, regional and international organizations and civil society. Our public events brought together Israeli, Palestinian and international experts. They addressed Jerusalem, Hebron, the situation of Palestinian women, forcible displacement, accountability and the question of apartheid. We campaigned for human rights defenders and for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). Simultaneously, we ramped up social media outreach and promoted capacity-building for stronger Palestinian institutions. In all our activities, the support provided by the Division for Palestinian Rights was instrumental throughout the reporting period.

As the Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, I have the honour to present its annual report (A/77/35), which

summarizes our achievements and reviews the alarming trends on the ground. The report covers developments relating to the question of Palestine, as well as the work of the Committee, between 1 September 2021 and 31 August 2022.

The report is composed of seven chapters. Chapters I and II contain the introduction to the report and a brief overview of the major political developments during the reporting period. The referenced developments served as the context for the Committee's evolving work programme and activities during the reporting period. Chapters III and IV outline the mandate entrusted to the Committee by the General Assembly and contain information on the organization of the Committee's work during the year. Chapter V outlines the work of the Committee, as well as the activities carried out on its behalf by the Division for Palestinian Rights, on four major aspects of its mandate: first, the mobilization of the diplomatic community; secondly, raising awareness; thirdly, cooperation with intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and United Nations entities; and fourthly, capacity-building. Chapter VI reports on the activities of the Special Information Programme on the Question of Palestine of the Department of Global Communications on the question of Palestine. Chapter VII, the final chapter of the report, contains the conclusions and recommendations of the Committee to the Assembly and other relevant actors, including the following, which I would like to specifically highlight.

The Committee is deeply concerned at the use by Israeli forces of excessive lethal force against Palestinians, including children. The Committee deplores the lack of accountability for illegal Israeli actions, including during the escalation in Gaza. The Committee reiterates that the indiscriminate launching of rockets towards Israeli population centres is prohibited by international humanitarian law and must stop immediately. The Committee is also disturbed by the use of force against Palestinians by Israeli settlers. The Committee calls on leaders to reject violence, speak up against those who seek to inflame the situation and refrain from actions that fuel tensions. The Committee calls on the Government of Israel to conduct prompt, independent and impartial investigations into all incidents, including the killing of Palestinian Al-Jazeera journalist Shireen Abu Akleh. The Committee calls on Israel to uphold its legal obligations and respect the status quo at the holy sites in Jerusalem.

The Committee urges the Secretary-General to continue to leverage his good offices and requests him to submit his reports on Security Council resolution 2334 (2016) in written format. It calls upon the Council to examine ways to secure the implementation of its resolutions, including through sanctions. The Committee is gravely concerned about the continued expropriation of Palestinian land and the settlement activities and reiterates that annexation is illegal. The Committee calls for an international protection mechanism for Palestinian civilians and insists that the Israeli blockade of Gaza be lifted in accordance with Security Council resolution 1860 (2009). It urges the United Nations and the international community to remain focused on the question of Palestine despite other global crises.

The Committee calls upon international organizations, such as the European Union, the League of Arab States, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, to take a more politically active role in stopping the annexation and mediating an end to the conflict. It condemns Israel's designation of six Palestinian non-governmental organizations as terrorist organizations. The Committee calls on relevant States to reconsider their decisions to recognize Jerusalem as the Israeli capital and withdraw embassies from the city. States, corporations and private entities should not be enabling human rights violations on the ground, such as settlement-building. States should distinguish between the territory of Israel and the occupied territories, as stipulated in resolution 2334 (2016). The Committee calls on Member States to support UNRWA financially and vote for the Agency in the Assembly. It calls for support for Palestinian institutions and the Palestinian Government's fiscal stability. Efforts to stabilize conditions on the ground should be linked to a credible political framework.

I would now like to introduce the four draft resolutions circulated under this agenda item, which were prepared in consultation with regional groups and unanimously approved by the Committee. They concern the fundamental principles for the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, the mandates and work of the Committee, the Division for Palestinian Rights and the Special Information Programme on the Question of Palestine. I would like to highlight a few elements of the draft resolutions. Members will note the omission of specific time frames concerning the Committee, the Division and the Special Information

Programme, which means that draft resolutions thereon will be submitted only as needed in the future, if there is a change to their mandates that needs to be reflected.

Draft resolution A/77/L.23 requests the Committee to mobilize international solidarity and support for the Palestinian people and for restoring a political horizon and advancing a just, lasting and comprehensive peace, particularly during this critical period of political instability, further reduction of civic space in the occupied Palestinian territory, humanitarian hardship and financial crisis. It invites all Governments and organizations to extend their cooperation to the Committee.

Draft resolution A/77/L.24 renews the mandate of the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat for its work in support of the Committee's mandate. It requests the Division to dedicate its activities in 2023 to the commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Nakba, including with a high-level event to be held in the General Assembly Hall on 15 May 2023.

Draft resolution A/77/L.25 renews the mandate of the Special Information Programme on the Question of Palestine of the Department of Global Communications to support media awareness as a contribution to establishing peace between Palestinians and Israelis. It condemns the killing of renowned Palestinian journalist Shireen Abu Akleh, calls for accountability and welcomes the decision to name the United Nations training programme for Palestinian journalists in her honour.

Draft resolution A/77/L.26 reaffirms and updates the consensus positions of the international community and reiterates the fundamental principles that should govern the peaceful settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The Committee hopes that those and other provisions of the texts will elicit the traditional strong support of the Assembly and calls on all Member States to vote in favour of draft resolutions A/77/L.23, A/77/L.24, A/77/L.25 and A/77/L.26.

**The President:** I now give the floor to the Permanent Observer of the Observer State of Palestine.

**Mr. Mansour** (Palestine): Seventy-five years ago, a very different General Assembly adopted resolution 181 (II), partitioning Palestine without ever consulting the people of Palestine and without fully examining or understanding the consequences of that decision

for successive generations of Palestinians. Within months, two thirds of our people were forced to leave their homes. An entire nation faced dispossession and displacement — and the denial of their rights. That was the case then, and it remains the case to this day. The plan was, and in many aspects still is, to displace and replace our people on our ancestral land, in other words, maximum Palestinian geography with minimum Palestinian demography. Our people faced what would become the most protracted refugee crisis, protection crisis and justice crisis in the history of the United Nations.

The Nakba is the destruction of entire Palestinian communities and hundreds of towns and villages. It is the attempt to uproot a nation. This historical injustice occurred 75 years ago, and it has occurred every day since then. But while Palestine refugees were uprooted from Palestine, there was no force on Earth that could uproot Palestine from their being.

In their tents, refugees conceived and built one of the most consequential liberation movements on Earth. Palestinians in historical Palestine, enduring systematic discrimination and military occupation, dug their roots even deeper into the land, determined to see the Nakba one day reversed — not repeated.

Israel occupied the land, all the land, spreading its control and its colonies. But the Palestinian people remained steadfast. Israel was seeking surrender, but it found *samoud* — steadfastness.

I stand in this Hall after 75 years of Israeli policies that aim to uproot our people to proclaim that there are 7 million Palestinians living in historical Palestine and 7 million Palestine refugees and members of diaspora in which Palestine lives. That makes 14 million Palestinians who will not disappear, who will not despair and who will not surrender.

Today, by adopting a resolution that decides to commemorate in this General Assembly Hall the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Nakba, the General Assembly will finally acknowledge the historical injustice that has befallen the Palestinian people. Our people deserve recognition of their plight, justice for the victims, reparations for their losses and fulfilment of their rights.

The year 2022 has been the deadliest year for Palestinians in the West Bank since the second intifada. It is the year that has witnessed an unprecedented



increase in assaults against the sanctity of Al-Haram Al-Sharif. It is the year of intensified demolitions and evictions in Jerusalem and Massafer Yatta. It is the year of continued blockade and aggression against our people in Gaza.

As I address the General Assembly in this Hall, a father had to carry the bodies of his two sons killed on the same day in Beit Rima, and a mother was denied her wish to give her son's body a final warm embrace, as Israel continues to hold hostage hundreds of Palestinian bodies. As I address the Assembly today, children and their parents live in fear of the next Israeli bombardment, the next Israeli incursion, the next arbitrary arrest, the next demolition of a school or their own houses.

There is nowhere safe in Palestine — nowhere. No one is safe in Palestine — no one. The right to security belongs to the lawful owner of the house, not to the thief breaking in. The right to security belongs to the people under occupation, not to those occupying them. We believe that civilians should be protected and spared, but who is deprived and denied protection? It is our people. Who is under constant assault? It is our people. Who is unarmed? It is our people. We call once again on the international community to provide protection to the Palestinian people, which is protection to which they are entitled.

The settlers' agenda has been Israeli official policy for a while now. I do not doubt that every country represented in this Hall hopes to see the occupation end and peace prevail. But one fails to see how this can happen the same policies that led us to this Hall in the first place are being pursued. These policies have effectively shielded and emboldened Israel to such a point that we are witnessing the formation of the most colonial, racist and extremist Government in the history of Israel, which is saying something. What will the world's response be? What will the General Assembly's response be? That response will determine where we go next.

Some countries keep denouncing what they refer to as "singling out of Israel", and we keep telling them that what truly singles Israel out is not the amount of criticism legitimately directed against its crimes and violations, but the level of impunity it enjoys despite these condemnations. Israeli exceptionalism has only emboldened the Israelis' worst instincts. That is not defending Israel; rather, it is shielding its illegal occupation and annexation of our land. Would I be helping my friend if I emboldened him to pursue his worst instincts instead of helping him correct his path?

Let us be clear. We are at the end of the road for the two-State solution. Either the international community summons the will to act decisively, or it will let peace die passively — passively, not peacefully. There is no two-State solution without a sovereign and independent State of Palestine based on the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital. Anybody serious about the two-State solution must help salvage the Palestinian State — the State of Palestine. It must be recognized now, without further delay. Palestine's membership in the United Nations must be supported, and it must be helped to spread its sovereignty. There is no two-State solution with annexation. There is no two-State solution without respect for our dignity, our humanity and our rights. And if there is no two-State solution, then the alternative is what we are living under now, namely, a regime that has combined the evils of colonialism and apartheid.

Who wants to be the ally of such a regime? History is taking names. History is watching all of us and our conduct.

To this day, the Palestinian people have borne the brunt of the cost of the occupation, specifically the human cost, as this year and every year prove, with our children killed on the streets and in their homes, and with our people enduring sacrifice and suffering. We also endure the economic cost of the occupation, which has been estimated by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development at \$58 billion in the West Bank alone since the year 2000. We would be donor independent virtually overnight if the occupation was to end today.

Do members want to end the conflict? They need only make sure that the cost of occupation for Israel far outweighs the benefits it draws from it. There is only one way to stop a bully: that is to hold him accountable. There is only one way to end the Israeli occupation: that is to end impunity.

I look at the great majority of the country name plates in this Hall and I see a part of our own history, when we fought side by side with the liberation movements that many in the General Assembly today once represented. I remember when, as a junior diplomat, I used to sit on one side of the Hall as the representative of the Palestine Liberation Organization together with the representatives of the African National Congress and the South-West Africa People's Organization.

Israel often wonders how come these countries side with Palestine, stand with Palestine, vote with Palestine, ache for Palestine. They do not understand that our peoples forged bonds in struggle, that we stood shoulder to shoulder in the same trenches. They do not understand that these countries vote in solidarity with their brothers and sisters in Palestine, that they do so to honour their own history, their own struggle, their own heroes, their own sacrifices. We fight the same evils that they defeated, and we fight for the same rights that they achieved; they just refuse to leave us behind. And we thank them for that and appreciate the strong bond between us.

Israel wonders why so many countries vote for these resolutions. They expect countries that champion people's human rights, the United Nations Charter and international law to abandon the ideals therein for the sake of the Israeli occupation. They cannot and will not because they stand with and uphold international law and human rights, which is why they stand with the just cause of the Palestinian people.

Israel says the Arab world no longer cares about Palestine. The Algiers summit, and before it, the summit in Jeddah, provided a clear response to such claims, and if that were not enough, the holding of the World Cup in Qatar has dealt a decisive blow to Israeli illusions. The winner of this World Cup is already known. It is Palestine, with its flag carried by people from every corner of the Arab world and the rest of the globe, present at every match and in people's chants. If we asked Israeli journalists at the World Cup about this, they would say that nothing can normalize the Israeli occupation and that nothing can extract Palestine from people's hearts and minds.

We are meeting in this Hall to discuss the question of Palestine, but, in many ways, Palestine is the answer. Justice in Palestine would mean that our international-law-based order has triumphed over impunity and double standards. Justice in Palestine would mean that freedom and peaceful settlement and coexistence have triumphed over oppression and discrimination. Justice in Palestine means that we upheld the principle that we are equals as human beings and as nations.

If this is truly an international-based order, then no one should obstruct international courts from delivering justice instead of stopping criminals from committing crimes. The reason Israel is so afraid of

international courts is that it knows the law. It just chooses to ignore it, trample it and breach it. Who is there better than the International Court of Justice, the highest court in our international order, to guide the General Assembly? The problem is not resorting to the courts seeking guidance and justice; rather, it is the effort to obstruct them and allow continued injustice. The international community told Israel it had to choose between settlements and a peaceful settlement of the conflict, as the two are incompatible. Israel chose a long time ago and has persisted in its choice. The only remaining question is what the world will do to ensure that Israel reverses that decision and adopts the right one.

The Palestinian people do not ask for anything more than what other nations represented in this Hall enjoy. Nor will they ever settle for less. We will be, one way or another, one day or another, free at last.

**Mrs. Kamboj** (India): On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, which was observed yesterday, the Prime Minister of India, Mr. Narendra Modi, extended his best wishes to the people of Palestine in their endeavour to achieve Statehood, peace and prosperity. In his message, he also reaffirmed our long-standing relationship with the Palestinian people, based on deep-rooted historical and people-to-people ties. It is my honour to reiterate those sentiments today at this august gathering of the General Assembly.

India has emphasized that only a negotiated two-State solution leading to the establishment of a sovereign, independent and viable State of Palestine and taking into consideration Israel's legitimate security concerns can deliver lasting peace. To this end, India continues to reiterate the need for an early resumption of direct peace negotiations between the parties on all final-status issues. The absence of such negotiations and the lack of a clear political horizon for the peaceful resolution of the conflict has consequences for both Israel and Palestine. It risks the recurrence of a cycle of violence, which will only increase the number of civilian casualties on both sides. All parties must also protect civilians, especially women and children.

We therefore urge the parties to cease violence and avoid unilateral actions on the ground that undercut the viability of the two-State solution. That will also help in bridging the trust deficit between the parties.

We condemn the twin terror attacks that took place in Jerusalem on 23 November. We offer our condolences to the victims' families, and we wish the injured a speedy

recovery. Terrorism is a global threat; only a unified and zero-tolerance approach can eventually defeat it.

In conclusion, India remains committed to supporting all efforts aimed at resuming direct negotiations between the Israelis and the Palestinians in order to reach a two-State solution. Lasting peace in the region can be achieved only when there is a peaceful settlement to the question of Palestine.

**Mr. Gómez Robledo Verduzco (Mexico)** (*spoke in Spanish*): Mexico approaches the consideration of the question of Palestine in the General Assembly with the clarity that our objective is not just to promote a comprehensive and definitive solution to the conflict based on the premise of two States and which also addresses the legitimate security concerns of Israel but also to allow the consolidation of a politically and economically viable Palestinian State living in peace with Israel within secure and internationally recognized borders, with Jerusalem as the future capital of both States, and all this in accordance with international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions.

While the responsibility for resuming the peace process lies primarily with Israel and Palestine, it is up to the international community to promote, facilitate and support this process in order to ensure a just and sustainable peace in the region. In this regard, Mexico recognizes the multilateral initiatives undertaken to achieve a negotiated solution based on the aforementioned conditions. Furthermore, we reiterate our call for the Palestinian National Authority to convene and hold presidential and legislative elections in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, in accordance with the Algiers Declaration.

As established in Security Council resolution 2334 (2016), the cessation of Israeli settlement activity in Palestinian territory is fundamental to the two-State solution. Mexico therefore reiterates its call for the cessation of all settlement-related activities, as the construction and expansion of these settlements represent violations of international law and numerous United Nations resolutions. Evictions, displacements, seizures and demolitions of Palestinian structures must also be stopped in order to prevent the negative trends on the ground from continuing to develop. Accordingly, we support the petition for a new advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice, which the Fourth Committee of the General Assembly approved a few days ago, and we have full confidence that the

International Court of Justice will determine the legal consequences of these practices, which, in Mexico's view, are totally contrary to international law.

Mexico also strongly condemns the attacks from Gaza against Israel and recognizes, as we have already said, Israel's legitimate security concerns. However, we reiterate that Israeli security forces must observe the principles of necessity, proportionality and distinction when exercising the right to self-defence, in accordance with international humanitarian law. The recurrent use of lethal munitions against civilians contravenes these principles.

We also take note of the reports of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, as well as the report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel. The forthcoming renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East will provide greater certainty for the discharge of its indispensable mandate. We underscore that the Agency requires predictable funding to enable it to provide ongoing humanitarian assistance and basic services to more than 5 million Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and in Palestine itself. Mexico will renew its voluntary contribution of \$750,000 to the Agency.

The establishment of diplomatic relations between Israel and some Arab countries undoubtedly represented a step towards stability in the region. It is a sign that there are opportunities for mutual understanding and the relaunching of the Middle East peace process. In this regard, we also welcome the agreement reached between Israel and Lebanon on their maritime border, following the praiseworthy mediation of the United States. These advances should indicate that the path to promoting a sustainable peace agreement between Israel and Palestine is possible.

As a country committed to the peaceful settlement of disputes, Mexico will continue to support all efforts aimed at establishing a lasting peace in the region, based on mutual respect and full adherence to the rule of law.

**Mr. Mahmoud (Egypt)** (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to express Egypt's appreciation for convening today's meeting under agenda item

33 entitled, "The Question of Palestine", and for the relevant draft resolutions before us (A/77/L.23, A/77/L.24, A/77/L.25 and A/77/L.26).

Those draft resolutions are of special importance given the important role played by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. The Committee raises awareness about the Palestinian question and the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people that they have not enjoyed yet, foremost of which are their rights to self-determination and the independence of their own State within the 4 June 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, notwithstanding 75 years after the General Assembly adopted resolution 181 (II), on partitioning the historical land of Palestine.

The General Assembly will also be considering other draft resolutions of special importance, such as draft resolution A/77/L.26, on the peaceful settlement of the Palestinian question, which reiterates the groundwork for a peaceful solution, which we desperately need given the serious challenges facing the Palestinian question on the ground, peace prospects and the two-State solution.

Along with many other States, Egypt has already warned of the dangers of Israeli violations, which include heightened violence by the occupation forces and settlers against defenceless civilians, including children, in addition to settlement expansion, the destruction of Palestinian houses and facilities, the siege and incursion against certain Palestinian cities, the ongoing siege against Gaza Strip and breaches of the status quo of the holy sites in East Jerusalem.

*Mr. Wallace (Jamaica), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

The General Assembly will also be considering draft resolutions of the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat (A/77/L.24) and the Special Information Programme on the Question of Palestine of the Department of Global Communications of the Secretariat (A/77/L.25). Egypt fully supports the draft resolutions, given the important role played by the Division for Palestinian Rights and the Department of Global Communication in supporting the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people.

We are all duty-bound to acknowledge, after all the decades of suffering for the Palestinian people, that the only way to resolve the Palestinian question is by

implementing international law and the resolutions of international legitimacy, in particular the relevant United Nations resolutions, the two-State solution and the Arab Peace Initiative. Any attempts to just manage that decades-long conflict or to freeze the status quo will not achieve peace or stability in the entire region. Moreover, given the tensions that we are currently witnessing in the occupied territories, the situation is able to explode again at any moment.

From that standpoint, Egypt stresses once again the importance of urgently establishing a political framework for reviving the peace negotiations between the two sides, the Israelis and the Palestinians, while working to build confidence between the two sides by ending all unilateral measures, especially the settlement expansion, improving conditions on the ground, maintaining the status quo at the holy sites in East Jerusalem under the custodianship of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordanian and supporting the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East so that it can fully carry out its mandate for Palestinian refugees.

In conclusion, Egypt reiterates that the only way to achieve security and stability in the Middle East is by ensuring all the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and by establishing an independent Palestinian State along the 4 June 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

**Mr. Albanai (Kuwait)** (*spoke in Arabic*): The State of Kuwait attaches particular importance to agenda item 33, which we discuss in this Hall every year as part of the General Assembly's agenda. This year's debate takes place as we commemorate the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People at the United Nations. We once again commemorate that anniversary as the resolute Palestinian people continue, unfortunately, to suffer from the worst kinds of aggressions by Israel, the occupying Power, in a series of its ongoing violations against them without any genuine international response to put an end to that injustice.

It is regrettable that we are ending this year as we began it. Like every year, Israel, the occupying Power, continues to defy international resolutions, particularly those of the Security Council. Israel continues to blatantly violate the Charter of the United Nations, international law, international humanitarian law and international human rights law. It continues to violate the 1949 Geneva Conventions and other international treaties and instruments. What we see today are the symptoms



of a disease. That disease is the occupation, which has tried everything. It fought, killed, displaced, divided and destroyed families, homes and the environment. It committed everything against the proud Palestinian people, but refused to respect international resolutions and end its occupation. It is high time that we treat that disease with the right medication.

Imam Ali Ibn Abu Talib said that a true friend is someone who told you the truth, and not someone who believed you. Allow me to stress that I am representing a country that is friends with everyone. I would like to ask a few questions that must be put to the participants in this Hall. For how long will the occupation of Palestinian and Arab territories continue as the international community stands by and watches? Why is Israel, the occupying Power, allowed to systematically perpetrate criminal violations without any accountability, as if it were above the law? For how long will Member States continue to deal with the just Palestinian question on the basis of double standards? For how long will we remain silent while the Palestinian people are deprived of their legitimate rights, as if the rights of the Palestinian people were exempt from the rules and provisions of international law?

Unfortunately, after long decades, those questions remain unanswered. The international community remains unable to address the Palestinian question. It remains unable to hold Israel, the occupying Power, accountable. That is the worst failure — I reiterate, the worst failure — in the history of the United Nations, in general, and the Security Council, in particular. In truth, that is the greatest disgrace for humankind.

Due to the intransigence of Israel, the occupying Power, and its criminal practices, which violate international law, today the international community finds itself further away from any political prospect that might pave the way towards a just solution to the Palestinian question, the most central issue for Arabs and Muslims.

In short, the issue is the following: there can be no peace, security or safety as long as the occupation continues. What we have seen in the past few years are systematic steps that have taken us further away from peace. Those steps seek to entrench the illegal occupation by expanding and building illegal settlements in blatant violation of international resolutions, particularly Security Council resolution 2334 (2016). That thwarts the two-State solution.

In that regard, allow me to quote from the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People:

“The unrelenting expansion of settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, further entrenched the Israeli occupation and threatened the viability of a future independent State of Palestine.” (*A/77/35, para. 8*)

In the same context, I would also like to quote another United Nations source, namely, the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Mr. Tor Wennesland, who said before the Security Council this week:

“After decades of persistent violence, illegal settlement expansion, dormant negotiations and deepening occupation, the conflict is again reaching a boiling point.” (*S/PV.9203, p.2*)

I will also quote a third United Nations source, that is, the report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, Ms. Francesca Albanese, who accurately detailed the occupation as:

“that of an intentionally acquisitive, segregationist and repressive regime designed to prevent the realization of the Palestinian people’s right to self-determination. Since 1967, Israel has wilfully and intentionally violated the self-determination of the Palestinians in the occupied Palestinian territory, by preventing their exercise of territorial sovereignty over natural resources, suppressing their cultural identity and repressing Palestinian political character and resistance. In short, Israeli endeavours in the occupied Palestinian territory are indistinguishable from settler-colonialism; by seizing, annexing, fragmenting and transferring its civilian population to the occupied territory, Israeli occupation violates Palestinian territorial sovereignty; by extracting and exploiting Palestinians’ resources in order to generate profits benefiting third parties, including settlers, it violates Palestinians’ sovereignty over natural resources needed to develop an independent economy; by erasing or appropriating symbols expressing Palestinian identity, the occupation endangers the cultural existence of the Palestinian people; by repressing Palestinian political activity, advocacy and activism, the occupation violates Palestinians’ ability to organize themselves as a people, free from alien domination and control.” (*A/77/356, para. 73*)

I did not say those things; they come from United Nations sources describing the reality of the occupation.

In the past few months and weeks, we have noted a dangerous escalation in the Palestinian territories due to the systematic aggression and crimes perpetrated by Israel, the occupying Power, against the brotherly Palestinian people. In addition, the Al-Aqsa Mosque remains the target of repeated violations, both by Israeli occupation forces and by settlers. In that regard, the State of Kuwait once again strongly condemns and denounces those aggressive practices, which amount to a provocation of Muslims around the world and a blatant threat to the freedom of religion at the Al-Aqsa Mosque. That is a new episode in the series of blatant violations of all international resolutions and instruments. It is destructive to stability in the region, fuelling hatred, extremism and violence.

Given the grim reality on the ground and the injustice against the brotherly Palestinian people, the State of Kuwait reiterates its call on the international community to take immediate and urgent action to provide protection to the brotherly Palestinian people. We call on the Security Council to shoulder its responsibilities, as provided for in the Charter of the United Nations, to hold the Israeli occupation forces fully accountable for the consequences of their illegal and provocative crimes and practices in Jerusalem and at Al-Haram Al-Sharif, as well as their violations against the defenceless Palestinian people, their land and their holy sites.

The State of Kuwait also strongly supports Palestine's application to become a full-fledged Member of the United Nations. We call on all countries that do not recognize Palestine as a State to reconsider their position to ensure that it is in line with international law and with their positions in other parts of the world. Occupation is not different from one State to another. The legitimate right to self-defence is the same in every country. The implementation of resolutions of international legitimacy, particularly Security Council resolutions, does not differ from case to case.

The State of Kuwait fully supports the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), since we believe that it has a vital and important role in alleviating the suffering of Palestinian refugees in its five areas of operation. We call on the international community to continue to support UNRWA as it continues to provide

health, education and relief services. We believe that UNRWA is one of the main successes of the United Nations. It assists by providing support and ensuring the well-being of Palestinian refugees, as it has done for more than seven decades.

In conclusion, as we commemorate the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, allow me to take this opportunity to once again reiterate the support of the State of Kuwait to the brotherly Palestinian people, their leaders and their Government. We have historically stood in solidarity and taken a principled position with their just cause. Kuwait commends the resolve of the brotherly Palestinian people and supports their legitimate struggle against the occupation in order to enjoy all their legitimate political rights. The State of Kuwait once again stresses its adherence to the Arab, Muslim and international positions, which underscore that peace is the strategic choice and that a permanent, comprehensive and just solution must be based on the two-State solution, in line with the agreed terms of reference, namely, the relevant Security Council resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative. That will ensure that the Palestinian people enjoy all their legitimate political rights and establish an independent State on their land, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

**Ms. Al-Thani** (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank the President for having convened this meeting. I also thank the Chair and the members of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

Yesterday at United Nations Headquarters, we celebrated the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, whereby the international community reaffirmed the need to put an end to the suffering of the Palestinians and achieve a just, comprehensive and lasting solution to their question. The statement delivered to the commemoration on behalf of His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, Amir of the State of Qatar (see A/AC.183/PV.409) reiterated the commitment of our State and people to the solidarity with the brotherly Palestinian people, who continue their just struggle to regain their land, their holy sites and their inalienable rights supported by all international and humanitarian principles and laws.

At the forefront of those rights is the right to self-determination and the establishment of an independent, sustainable and viable Palestinian State within the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, on

the basis of the principle of the two-State solution and the Arab Peace Initiative and pursuant to resolutions of international legitimacy That requires an end to the Israeli occupation of all occupied Arab territories, including the occupied Syrian Golan and the occupied Lebanese territories. It is well known that that is the only way to achieve a lasting settlement to the Palestinian question, and that peace and stability in the Middle East will not be achieved without such a settlement.

We reiterate the State of Qatar's strong condemnation of the repeated attacks this year against the holy Al-Aqsa Mosque by the forces of the occupying Power, as well as by Israeli settlers with the support of those forces. We affirm that those attacks are a flagrant violation of international law and a provocation to the feelings of Muslims. We also stress that any attempts to undermine the existing historical and legal status of Islamic and Christian holy sites in occupied East Jerusalem, divide the holy Al-Aqsa Mosque temporally and spatially and restrict Muslims' freedom of worship there are null and void under international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions.

The State of Qatar welcomed the announcement by the Government of Australia that it will no longer recognize West Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. We believe that such a decision, which is in line with the international consensus and resolutions of international legitimacy, will support international efforts to achieve peace and enhance the possibility of a two-State solution.

The State of Qatar joins the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People in calling for an international, credible and transparent investigation without delay into the assassination of the Palestinian journalist Shireen Abu Akleh while doing her job as a correspondent for the Al-Jazeera channel. We view that crime as a flagrant violation of international humanitarian law and a serious encroachment on the freedom of information.

The State of Qatar fulfils its humanitarian and fraternal duty towards the brotherly Palestinian people by providing them with humanitarian, relief and development support, especially in the Gaza Strip, which is under occupation. We have contributed to strengthening the electricity supply, providing financial aid to Palestinian families and creating employment and education opportunities, in addition to repairing

and building Palestinian infrastructure and houses while strengthening the health, education, industry and agricultural sectors of Palestinians for the long term.

The State of Qatar has supported Palestinian reconciliation and emphasized its importance. We also welcomed the signing by the Palestinian factions of the Algeria declaration emanating from the Unification Conference to Achieve Palestinian National Unity as a positive step towards the achievement of national unity and the establishment of an independent Palestinian State.

In conclusion, we would like to underscore the importance of implementing the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly under the agenda item "Question of Palestine", which the State of Qatar co-sponsors annually. We take the opportunity to express our appreciation for the efforts of the Division for Palestinian Rights and the Special Information Programme on the Question of Palestine of the Department of Global Communication. We also reiterate the solidarity of the state of Qatar with the brotherly Palestinian people until they obtain their just rights.

**Mr. Gertze** (Namibia): At the outset, allow me to thank His Excellency Mr. Cheikh Niang, Permanent Representative of Senegal, for introducing draft resolutions A/77/L.23, A/77/L.24, A/77/L.25, A/77/L.26 and the annual report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (A/77/35).

Yesterday the Government of Namibia joined the international community in observing the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People (see A/AC.183/PV.409). The occasion was even more significant, as it served as a poignant reminder that 75 years have passed since the General Assembly adopted resolution 181 (II). That resolution set out to partition Palestine into two States — a Jewish State and an Arab State. The Assembly is well apprised of the fact that our collective aspiration 75 years ago was to achieve a peaceful resolution and bring about peaceful coexistence between the two peoples. While elusive over all those 75 years, achieving peace in the region remains our core objective and must continue to be at the centre of all our efforts.

It has now been 10 years since the State of Palestine was granted the status of non-member observer State to the United Nations. At the time, that move filled us

with hope that progress towards finalizing the two-State solution was finally in sight. Sadly, that has not materialized.

Our pledges of solidarity should not be only symbolic. They should be accompanied by a genuine desire to advance the legitimate cause of the Palestinian people as our commitment to a just, lasting and comprehensive solution to the question of Palestine, which has long been before the General Assembly.

Over the past year, we have witnessed a continuation in the persistent escalation of violence meted out against the Palestinian people by Israel, in flagrant violation of the General Assembly and the Security Council's repeated calls for the cessation of violations. Namibia strongly condemns the inhumane killing of Shireen Abu Akleh and the subsequent desecration of her funeral procession. We therefore find it befitting that the United Nations decided to honour her bravery and legacy by renaming the training programme for Palestinian broadcasters and journalists the Shireen Abu Akleh Training Programme for Palestinian Broadcasters and Journalists. It was an inhumane act that violated her dignity. However, it is also sadly a reflection of the violence meted out against Palestinians every single day. Namibia continues to advocate for a viable Palestinian State, existing side by side in peace with Israel within the internationally recognized pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

The responsibility of the United Nations for the resolution of the question of Palestine is a permanent one. We therefore support, and have full respect for, all United Nations-mandated processes geared towards bringing about a resolution to this complex question. It is therefore perplexing that Israel continues to be shielded despite its ongoing flagrant violation of international law, international humanitarian law and international human rights law, thereby denying the Palestinian people their most basic rights. That blatant inconsistency remains difficult to fathom. The Government of Namibia continues to implore Israel to work with international systems, processes and institutions to allow them unfettered access to carry out their responsibilities in accordance with their respective mandates, including humanitarian work. In the same vein, we further call on Israel to honour its obligations by virtue of its membership in the United Nations and in accordance with international law and international human rights law. The practice of unabated continued annexation and expansion of settlements is untenable.

War is destructive; it maims injures and destroys. Oppression is unkind. Occupation is not a means by which peace is born.

In that vein, Namibia welcomes, as a concrete next step, the proposal to request an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice on the legal consequences of Israel's prolonged occupation and colonization of the Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, its violation of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and its policies and measures of discrimination against them. With the passing of 20 years since the General Assembly last asked the International Court of Justice for an advisory opinion regarding the Palestine question, we support the decision to once again resort to seeking guidance from the international legal system on how best to seek recourse for the long-oppressed people of Palestine.

Namibia remains firmly committed to working with willing members of the international community to help the Palestinian people to realize their cherished dream of exercising their inalienable right to self-determination and the establishment of a viable and contiguous State. We have consistently championed that cause, and we will continue to rally behind it, for we yearn to hear freedom ring in the oppressed land of Palestine so that it too can join the family of free nations.

**Mr. Geng Shuang (China)** (*spoke in Chinese*): The question of Palestine is at the core of the Middle East issue. A comprehensive and just solution is critical to regional peace and stability, as well as international fairness and justice. The peaceful coexistence of the two States, Palestine and Israel, and the joint development of the two peoples, Arabs and Jews, are in the long-term interests of both sides and represent the common expectations of the international community.

Since the beginning of this year, the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory has continued to be volatile. Renewed fighting in Gaza has resulted in hundreds of civilian casualties and extensive damage to infrastructure. Violent clashes flared up in the West Bank. The peace and tranquility of the religious holy sites in Jerusalem have been repeatedly shattered. The facts once again prove that piecemeal crisis management cannot replace a comprehensive and just solution and that economic and humanitarian assistance, as a temporary measure, cannot end the long-entrenched political and security deficits. What is needed now is



firm political will, effective diplomatic action and the collective efforts of the entire international community, including the Security Council.

China is a sincere friend of the Palestinian people and a staunch supporter of peace between Palestine and Israel. In that regard, China has always stood on the side of peace, justice and righteousness. China encourages Palestine and Israel to pursue their common security. Israel and Palestine are inseparable neighbours, with interdependent and indivisible security. If one party's security is based on the other's insecurity, the cycle of violence will not be broken and the security dilemma will be insurmountable. The international community should pay equal attention to the security concerns of both sides and encourage them to optimize their common ground through dialogue and cooperation in order to achieve their mutual security. The occupying party should also effectively fulfil its obligations under international law in order to ensure the security of the people in the occupied territory. The legitimate security concerns of Israel should also be respected.

China calls for upholding the international rule of law. Settlement activities in violation of international law and Security Council resolution 2334 (2016) encroach on Palestinian land, expropriate Palestinian resources and squeeze the living space of the Palestinian people. We urge Israel to immediately fulfil its obligations under the relevant Security Council resolutions, cease all settlements activities, stop making unilateral changes to the status quo in the occupied territories and delineate the final borders through peaceful negotiations.

China supports the improvement of the Palestinian economy and the people's livelihoods. We call on Israel to ease unreasonable restrictions on land use and the movement of people in the occupied territories, create the conditions necessary for the development of Palestinian communities in the West Bank and lift the blockade on Gaza as soon as possible. The international community should provide assistance to Palestine through multiple channels in order to help ease its financial crisis and guarantee the delivery of public services. China supports the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and supports it in continuing to provide relief and assistance to Palestinian refugees. As always, China will provide humanitarian and development assistance to Palestine in order to help it develop its economy and improve its people's livelihoods.

China urges the full implementation of the two-State solution. The question of Palestine has remained unresolved for more than 70 years, and several generations of Palestinian refugees have been displaced. The search for a lasting settlement on the basis of the two-State solution is founded on international consensus and represents the only way forward, which must be pursued with determination. The international community must translate the two-State solution from consensus into action and from vision into reality. China advocates strengthening the authority of the Palestinian National Authority, supports greater unity among Palestinian factions and welcomes the reconciliation agreement reached by Palestinian factions in Algiers in October.

We advocate the resumption of peace talks as soon as possible and call for the convening of a larger-scale and more authoritative and influential international peace conference. We advocate prioritizing the issue on the international agenda and hope that the Security Council will play its part and take substantive steps to advance the two-State solution and support the restoration and exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. With regard to issues that affect the future of the Palestinian people, no one has the right to the veto. Yesterday marked the forty-fifth commemoration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. President Xi Jinping of China sent a congratulatory message to the commemorative meeting for the tenth consecutive year (see A/AC.183/PV.409), while stressing China's support for the just cause of the Palestinian people in seeking to restore their legitimate rights and expressing the hope that peace talks will resume as soon as possible and that the Middle East peace process will be put back on track.

I wish to reiterate China's support for the establishment of a fully sovereign and independent State of Palestine, based on the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital, as well as the peaceful coexistence of Palestine and Israel and the joint development of the two peoples — Arabs and Jews. As a permanent member of the Security Council and a responsible major Power, China will continue to work with the international community to practice genuine multilateralism and actively contribute to the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the Palestinian question, leading to enduring peace, universal security and shared prosperity in the Middle East.

**Mr. Aidid** (Malaysia): Allow me to begin by thanking the Secretary-General for his note (A/77/295) and the Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for its annual report (A/77/35).

Yesterday in the Chamber of the Economic and Social Council, on the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People (see A/AC.183/PV.409), we heard unequivocal calls from leaders, ministers, Governments and civil society organizations for a negotiated settlement towards achieving a just and peaceful solution of the question of Palestine. They are the same calls we have heard over the past seven decades. It is therefore unacceptable that the occupying Power should be allowed to remain oblivious despite the numerous calls of the international community to end the illegal occupation of the occupied Palestinian territory. It is also disturbing that the occupying Power continues to defy numerous relevant Security Council resolutions. It is unquestionably deplorable that the cries caused by human rights violations continue to fall not on deaf ears, but on ears that selectively decide which victims deserve to be defended in the eyes of the world.

Earlier, we heard the presentation of the annual report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People on the continued grave violations in Palestinian land, where forced evictions, demolitions, annexation and the pillaging of natural resources are committed in broad daylight. That adds to the many reports that have been issued over the years, including the monthly briefing of the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process provided to the Security Council this past Monday (see S/PV.9203). All those reports add up to a compendium that collects, preserves and documents the serious crimes and abuses inflicted upon Palestinian civilians. Israel's systematic oppression of Palestinians and discriminatory policies are tantamount to the crimes of apartheid, and Israel's settlements are illegal under international law. Those heinous war crimes are not only committed in defiance of international law but also undermine the prospect of achieving a viable and peaceful solution to the long-standing conflict.

The year 2022 has been described as the bloodiest year in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, since 2005, with daily and continuous violations committed against Palestinian civilians, including women and children. It would not be surprising

to see such crimes intensify in the years to come, owing to the continued enjoyment of impunity by the occupying Power and illegal settlers. Malaysia calls on all Member States that believe in the rule of law and human rights not to shy away from condemning Israel's illegal and inhumane actions. The international community must assume its responsibility for ensuring justice and accountability. The endless cycle of impunity must end, and the perpetrators must face justice. The Palestinian people not only deserve, but require, our protection. It behoves the Security Council, as the main custodian of the maintenance of international peace and security, to ensure that Member States comply with and implement the relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolutions 904 (1994) and 2334 (2016). To that end, Malaysia urges Member States to also support the call for the General Assembly to request an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice, with a focus on the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and the inadmissibility of the acquisition of its territory by force, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

Malaysia also urges the international community to support the call by Palestine for the convening of an international conference, with the full participation of all parties concerned, with a view to achieving freedom, justice and dignity for the Palestinian people.

Malaysia also calls for Member States to support the work and the mandate of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, which plays a pivotal and noble role in providing vital services and necessities for Palestinian refugees. Malaysia will do everything within its ability and capacity to continue to extend its support for the Palestinian people in exercising their inalienable rights to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty, which have long been denied. We strongly believe that full membership of Palestine in the United Nations will advance that legitimate, just and sustainable cause.

Malaysia also welcomed the signing of the Algiers declaration on 13 October and the commitment of all Palestinian parties to achieving reconciliation. We remain steadfast in our support for, and renew our unwavering commitment to, realizing the two-State solution, based on the pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as the capital of the State of Palestine.

**Mrs. Ali** (Maldives): My delegation wishes to express its sincere gratitude to the Secretary-General for the comprehensive report transmitted in his note (see A/77/295), which reflects the unprecedented impact of a discriminatory system on the people of Palestine for more than seven decades, including the failure of the international community to hold Israel accountable for the blatant violation of international law and international humanitarian law.

As we continue to work tirelessly to find common solutions to our common problems, we must not ignore the decades-long suffering of the Palestinian people. It is the longest unresolved issue on our agenda to date. In 2015, we made the collective commitment to leave no country behind. And indeed the Palestinian People must not be left behind — they must be free to determine their future and destiny. But the Palestinians continue to be denied the basic rights guaranteed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. As we are gathered here to deliberate, illegal settlement expansion continues in violation of Security Council resolution 2334 (2016), international humanitarian law and several General Assembly resolutions. The displacement of Palestinian families, including women, children, and the elderly, continues.

The blockade of the Gaza Strip continues. The excessive occupation is no longer acceptable. We call on the international community to do more to end the unlawful and illegal blockade on Gaza and all illegal activities in Gaza and to assist the Palestinian people. The international community must ensure that the human rights of the Palestinian people are realized. We are deeply concerned that, despite decades of efforts by the international community, including the efforts of the United Nations, the Palestinian people have yet to see justice. The people of Palestine have become stateless in their own land. We call on United Nations Member States to support the inalienable rights of the Palestinians and recognize Palestine as an independent State. We reiterate our firm support for the full recognition of the Palestinian State as a Member of the United Nations.

Today more than 5 million Palestinians refugees are eligible for the services provided by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). The staff of the Agency works tirelessly to provide humanitarian assistance to Palestinians, and we commend its members for their commitment and determination. At the same

time, we are deeply concerned about the funding difficulties being faced by UNRWA, which will have a lasting impact on Palestinian refugees. We urge the international community to support the provision of further funding for UNRWA.

The Maldives has always supported the establishment of an independent and sovereign State of Palestine, based on the pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, living side by side in peace and prosperity, as the best solution to the crisis. The Government and the people of the Maldives will continue to stand firmly and resolutely with the Palestinian people.

**Mr. Khan** (Pakistan): I thank the President for convening today's debate. At the outset, I would like to express my appreciation for the work done by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, especially with regard to raising awareness of the political, human rights and humanitarian situation in the occupied Palestinian territory. We also reaffirm our solidarity with the Palestinian people and reiterate our unwavering support for their inalienable rights as enshrined in resolution 3236 (XXIX), including the right to self-determination and the right to national independence and sovereignty.

The unilateral actions of Israel, with its continued illegal settlements alongside demolitions and evictions of Palestinians, are grave violations of United Nations resolutions and international law, including international humanitarian law. Surely the forcible acquisition of Palestinian land incites political instability, leads to economic dissolution and widespread human suffering and obscures the hopes for sustainable peace and stability going forward.

The report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (A/77/35) shares the most disturbing data on the loss of Palestinian lives and the wounding of Palestinians, including women and children, by Israel, the occupying Power. The international community is morally and legally obliged to end this deplorable situation. Over the past 15 years, the lives and well-being of 2.2 million Palestinians in the Gaza Strip have been in constant jeopardy. They have been denied the right to peace, freedom and self-determination in the face of the blockade, occupation and human rights violations. International human rights law and international humanitarian law both guarantee the freedom of movement inside an occupied territory.

Israel, as the occupying Power, has the obligation to allow the Palestinians to move among the West Bank, the Gaza and East Jerusalem, enabling them to keep their economic, family and religious commitments.

Given the dire challenges facing the Palestinians, international humanitarian and socioeconomic assistance serve as a lifeline, especially for the Palestinian refugees, who are heavily dependent on the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) for their subsistence. Ramping up support for UNRWA both politically and financially is one way to offer solace to the Palestinians. It must continue unhindered.

The perpetuation of the Israeli occupation will not bring peace to the Holy Land. If history is a guide, even if they are dispossessed and disempowered by Israel, every succeeding generation of Palestinians will persist in seeking their freedom and fundamental rights, including their right to self-determination. Pakistan continues to support a just and lasting solution to the Palestinian issue through dialogue and negotiations that leads to the realization of the legitimate right of the Palestinians, including the right to self-determination. We call for the establishment of a viable, independent and contiguous State of Palestine on the basis of internationally agreed parameters and the pre-1967 borders and with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.

**Mr. Ishikane** (Japan): Japan expresses its sincere hope for the realization of Middle East peace at the earliest possible date, with an independent Palestinian State and Israel living side by side in peace and security. Japan firmly believes that a truly peaceful resolution can be achieved, not through violence but only through dialogue, based on mutual trust between the parties and in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions and internationally agreed parameters.

Japan is deeply concerned about the situation on the ground, with the large number of casualties caused by violence and clashes in the West Bank. The expansion of Israeli settlement activities in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, is in violation of international law and United Nations resolutions and infringes upon Palestinians' human rights. Japan reiterates its call on the Government of Israel to immediately halt settlement activities, which undermine the viability of a two-State solution. Japan is also closely monitoring recent developments following the reconciliation deal signed in Algeria among Palestinian factions. The holding of legislative and presidential elections in Palestine is a crucial step towards Palestinian unity.

Japan will continue to support the people of Palestine as long as humanitarian and socioeconomic challenges remain in Palestine, particularly in Gaza. Next year will mark the seventieth anniversary of the partnership between the Government of Japan and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). Japan's assistance to UNRWA began even before Japan became a Member of the United Nations, and we believe that continued support for UNRWA is both a humanitarian imperative and vital for regional stability. This year, Japan provided approximately \$30 million in assistance, including \$8.3 million in emergency grant aid provided through UNRWA in response to the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip.

Japan strongly supports the establishment of a future independent and self-sustaining Palestinian State. The Conference on Cooperation among East Asian Countries for Palestinian Development, which was launched by Japan in 2013, is part of such efforts to leverage the resources and experience of East Asian countries to support Palestinian economic development.

Lastly, peace in the Middle East is an issue of historical importance for the stability and prosperity of the international community, including Japan. Although we, the international community, face many difficult challenges, the voices of the Palestinian people must not be ignored, and we must continue to give high priority to addressing the question of Palestine as one of our core agenda items. Japan, as an incoming member of Security Council, is committed to actively engaging and cooperating with the international community to achieve peace in the Middle East.

**Mrs. Pereira Portilla** (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation is grateful for the convening of this plenary meeting to address the Palestinian question. Colombia reaffirms its long-standing support for reaching a peaceful, definitive and comprehensive solution to the Palestinian question, based on the two-State solution, the 1967 borders and the agreements reached during the negotiation process, in accordance with the relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions. We reaffirm the importance of establishing confidence-building measures for that purpose, while at the same time we advocate full respect for the rights of the entire population. In line with the national Government's approach to achieving comprehensive peace within and beyond its borders, Colombia encourages the parties to redouble their



efforts to prevent future hostilities in the Middle East and reaffirms its call to move towards definitively resolving the causes of the conflict.

Colombia reiterates its support for the right of the Palestinian people to enjoy self-determination and establish an independent and sustainable State that is recognized by all other States. For that reason, Colombia co-sponsored the recently adopted resolution 76/150, entitled "The right of the Palestinian people to self-determination".

In conclusion, Colombia reiterates its support for the right of the State of Israel to live in peace, within secure and internationally recognized borders.

**Mr. Hilale** (Morocco) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to His Excellency Mr. Cheikh Niang and the members of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for its important role and the meaningful efforts it undertakes to find an ultimate solution to the Palestinian question, in line with the intergovernmental resolutions adopted thereon.

The Kingdom of Morocco, whose King, His Majesty Mohammed VI, chairs the Al-Quds Committee of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, stresses its firm and clear position on the just Palestinian question and the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and rejects any infringement whatsoever on those rights. We underscore the rights of the Palestinian people to establish a sovereign and viable Palestinian State, based on the June 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, living side by side with the State of Israel in stability, security and peace. The absence of a political horizon for the Palestinian question has regrettably led to extreme clashes that have spread hatred and violence, thereby transforming the political conflict into an ideological one that may have grave consequences for the overall region.

The Kingdom of Morocco attaches great importance to Al-Quds Al-Sharif, and we urgently call for the need to protect it as a cradle of the three monotheistic religions and a symbol of peaceful coexistence, dialogue and mutual respect. We believe that violating that city and the Al-Aqsa Mosque will jeopardize any chance of achieving peace and security in the Middle East. His Majesty King Mohammed VI, in his Jerusalem Appeal, signed jointly with Pope Francis during the Pope's visit to the Kingdom of Morocco on 30 March 2019, stressed

the importance of safeguarding the holy city as part of the shared heritage of humankind in view of its special legal, historic and demographic status, while keeping it open to the followers of the three monotheistic religions.

His Majesty King Mohammed VI personally oversees the work of the Bayt Mal Al-Quds Al-Sharif as an executive mechanism of the Al-Quds Committee in order to implement projects and programmes in the areas of health, education, housing and social welfare for the benefit of those living in Jerusalem, which is highly appreciated and commended by the Palestinian people and leadership.

The International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People offers us an opportunity every year to renew our commitment to supporting the Palestinian question. This year, it is observed in highly sensitive regional and international circumstances. His Majesty King Mohammed VI took that occasion to express Morocco's solidarity in a letter addressed to the Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, in which he called for disassociating the just Palestinian cause from narrow and futile self-interests that do not advance it. The Day also provides a good opportunity to call upon all Palestinian parties to work together as one to build strong Palestinian institutions, under the leadership of our brother President Mahmoud Abbas of the State of Palestine, in order to achieve the aspirations of the brotherly Palestinian people for freedom, independence and a good life.

In conclusion, I would like to stress that the Kingdom of Morocco will continue to play its historic role and work to maintain good relations with all parties and international stakeholders in order to create an environment conducive to reviving the negotiations. That is the only way to achieve security and stability in the Middle East region.

**Mr. Erdan** (Israel): We will soon vote on a number of draft resolutions (A/77/L.23, A/77/L.24, A/77/L.25 and A/77/L.26), the sole purpose of which is to put all the blame for what is happening in the Middle East exclusively on Israel, while absolving the Palestinians of any responsibility for their situation. Year after year a package of draft resolutions is brought forth by Palestine's proxies, and year after year all those distorted draft resolutions are adopted, ensuring that the conflict never ends. While the majority of members here back those biased lies, not for a moment do those

Member States take into account the true destruction they are propagating. When they support one-sided draft resolutions, they are not helping the Palestinian people — they are merely turning this institution and themselves into accomplices in the Palestinian's jihad war in order to destroy any chance for reconciliation.

Like any conflict, this conflict can be solved in one way only, with both sides sitting down at the negotiating table and — surprise, surprise — both sides making mutual concessions. Yet every time any peace proposal has ever been placed on the table, as all members will remember, the Palestinians reject it outright. They refuse to even negotiate or budge one inch from their outrageous demands, which if granted would ensure the destruction of the Jewish State. But that constant rejectionism would not be their *modus operandi* without the assistance of the United Nations or without members' support. Due to their automatic support, the Palestinians are empowered to continue on their destructive path. When members sit in this Hall and consistently vote in favour of the Palestinians' twisted draft resolutions, what message do they think they are sending? Do they think that, by blindly doing whatever the Palestinians ask of them, they will rush back to the negotiating table? Of course not. By supporting draft resolutions that single out, condemn and vilify Israel, members are telling the Palestinians that their path of incitement and terror funding truly pays off. They can continue murdering innocent Israelis and boycott any dialogue or negotiations while the international community continues to stand behind them. How can members expect the Palestinian leadership to compromise on any of their absurd demands when every single one of their absurd draft resolutions is adopted? If members want to resolve the conflict, they must stop supporting those falsehoods. The time to stop that madness is today.

Today we are voting on five more Israel-bashing draft resolutions. Yet, within those draft resolutions, the Palestinians have planted a clause that lays their twisted grasp of reality out clearly for all to see. Sadly, members are expected to assist them in distorting history and distorting the truth. Those draft resolutions now include the request to mark the seventy-fifth anniversary of the State of Israel's establishment with a high-level event in this Hall. The event will not of course be a celebration of Israel but rather a commemoration of the so-called Nakba, or disaster — a disaster that the Palestinians brought upon themselves

with their own aggression by waging a war against Israel and a disaster that the Arab world perpetuates to this day by refusing to integrate the descendants of the refugees from that same war into Arab society, while using them — with members' help — as political tools. I would ask members to try to imagine the countries of the international community commemorating their day of independence by calling it a disaster. What a disgrace. Many members have spoken to me personally about the refugee problem, admitting that there is no chance that the millions of descendants of Palestinian refugees — 5.5 million people, as the number currently stands — will ever return to Israel. Not only is such a demand unjust, as members all know that it would destroy Israel immediately and completely, but they are afraid to repeat that truth publicly. Why must the United Nations constantly serve as a house of lies?

Nevertheless, now that we are on the topic of the Nakba and refugees, I would like to recall the historical facts behind that false Nakba and remind members of the true Nakba. On 29 November 1947 — exactly 75 years ago yesterday — the General Assembly voted to adopt resolution 181 (II), also known as the partition plan. In that resolution, the international community showed its support for establishing a Jewish State alongside an Arab State. My people, the Jewish people, accepted that resolution without hesitation, but the Arabs and the Palestinians did not. Five Arab armies, together with the Arabs living in Israel, tried to destroy and annihilate us. But it did not end with attempts to decimate the nation State.

Two days after Israel's establishment, the following was the headline in *The New York Times*. It did not read "Arabs in Grave Danger in All Jewish Lands"; it read "Jews in Grave Danger in All Muslim Lands". The Arab countries and Iran immediately began to expel the Jews living throughout the Middle East and North Africa. Over the years, hundreds of thousands of Jewish families were uprooted from their homes, robbed of their valuables and property and forcefully cast out of the countries where they had lived for millennia. Those Jewish communities did not revolt against the international community's decision. They did not try to annihilate another people. Their only crime was being Jewish. That is the true Nakba, the disaster carried out against the Jewish people that this organ has ignored for decades. Look at this family that was expelled. Stop ignoring the Jewish Nakba.

It is insane that the very same side that started the violence requests members' support in distorting history, but it is even more absurd that so many of them are willing to validate such lunacy. Where is the limit? At what point will this organ say enough is enough? The hypocrisy here knows no bounds, and the institutionalized bias against the Jewish State is truly unmatched. Yet, beyond wrongfully condemning Israel, every Member State that supports those falsehoods also helps perpetuate the conflict. Palestinian lies must no longer be accepted on the world's stage, just as this organ must stop allowing the Palestinians to continue pulling its strings. I urge all members to stop blindly supporting the Palestinians' libel and to stop voting in favour of those dangerous fabrications.

**Mr. Nasir** (Indonesia): For decades, we have gathered here to tackle the question of Palestine, yet the fact that we continue to meet here year after year demonstrates our failure as a global community. While we have been able to make progress on addressing other important issues in the Assembly, the question of Palestine remains unresolved. It is our urgent moral obligation to find a solution for the people of Palestine. We must not differentiate the suffering of the Palestinians from the suffering of people facing conflicts in other parts of the world that have enjoyed the Assembly's attention in the recent past.

It is unacceptable that the Palestinian people have continued to endure extreme suffering year in and year out for decades. This year alone, hundreds of Palestinian civilians, many of them children, were killed by the occupying Power, while thousands more were injured. The economic costs of the restrictions imposed by Israel, as rightly noted by the Secretary-General, have led only to even greater suffering for the people of Palestine. The occupying Power, on the other hand, has enjoyed enormous unjust economic gains from the resources of the Palestinian people.

We have called on many occasions for the international community to work together to address the core problem — bringing an immediate end to the illegal Israeli occupation. Today my delegation reiterates that call and wishes to emphasize three points.

First, in the absence of a political solution, we must continue to provide support to the Palestinian people. While in the clutches of the occupying Power and a repressed economy, the people of Palestine have limited means to survive, let alone develop, which forces them to

be highly dependent on aid. The international community must therefore continuously support the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) with sustainable and predictable funding. For millions of Palestinian refugees, UNRWA is a lifeline and a source of hope. For our part, in addition to grants and humanitarian assistance, Indonesia continues to provide support through trade facilitation, capacity-building, scholarships and training.

Secondly, we must end the sense of impunity and hold the occupying Power accountable. Indonesia deplores the continued expansion of illegal settlements, demolitions, evictions and restrictions that have deprived the Palestinian people of their legitimate rights. Moreover, the increasing violence, human rights violations and segregation of the Palestinian people sustained by the occupying Power have amounted to an apartheid policy and must be put to an end. Indonesia also calls for the complete lifting of the Israeli blockade of Gaza, which has resulted in a grave deterioration in the humanitarian situation. We cannot continue to watch those actions run rampant in the occupied Palestinian territories, while calling for accountability in unjust situations in other parts of the world. The request for the International Court of Justice to render an advisory opinion on the legal consequences of the ongoing occupation must therefore be supported.

Thirdly, we need a paradigm shift to revive the stalled peace process. We urge all relevant parties to resume credible multilateral negotiations, based on a two-State solution in line with internationally agreed parameters. Until that aspiration is met, we must support every effort to defend the two-State solution. We must reject actions that may drive us further away from the internationally agreed and accepted two-State solution as the only viable option. That includes safeguarding the status quo of the holy sites. Equally important is that Palestine maintain the momentum towards national reconciliation and continue to strengthen its national institutions.

On the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, which we commemorated yesterday, the international community reaffirmed its commitment to solving the question of Palestine. We must transform that commitment into action in order to ensure a political horizon for that long-standing crisis. Indonesia stands ready to render its assistance and supports all efforts to achieve a just, comprehensive and lasting solution for the people of Palestine.

**Ms. Joyini** (South Africa): I thank the President of the General Assembly for convening this meeting on the question of Palestine with the aim of promoting the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. This meeting comes at an opportune time, as we observed the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People yesterday.

South Africa expresses its unwavering support for the people of Palestine as they pursue their irrefutable right to self-determination. Seventy-five years ago, on 29 November 1947, the General Assembly adopted resolution 181 (II), which came to be known as the partition resolution. That resolution provided for the establishment in Palestine of a Jewish State and an Arab State, with Jerusalem as a *corpus separatum* under a special international regime. Of the two States to be created under that resolution, only one has come into existence to date. A total of 8 million Palestinians reside in territories that have been occupied by Israel since 1967. To date, Israel has systematically constructed more than 180 settlements and outposts on land seized from the Palestinian people. More than 700,000 Israelis live in settlements built from the ruins of demolished and destroyed Palestinian property. South Africa expresses its utter dismay that the current status quo persists and that the realization of the two-State solution appears to be a mendacious hope, notwithstanding international consensus. The negotiation process between Israel and the State of Palestine is a matter of convening the parties to chart a way forward. However, Israel's leaders continue to visibly express reservations about their commitment to a two-State solution.

The report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (A/77/35) confirms the conclusions of the report (see A/77/328) of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel, established by the Human Rights Council. Both reports found that discrimination against Palestinians and the continued Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territory since 1967 were the main causes of the region's ongoing tensions, instability and conflict. It is therefore plain for any Member State to see where the root of the conflict lies. The continued expansion of illegal Israeli settlements, expulsions, demolitions and destruction of Palestinian properties throughout the occupied Palestinian territory is a brazen and illegal tactic by Israel to alter the demographic balance, character and status of East Jerusalem in favour of a

Jewish majority. Israel's imposition of an apartheid system, detailed in several reports by international as well as Israeli and Palestinian human rights organizations and manifested through stringent policies depriving the Palestinian people of their freedom, dignity and rights, debilitates any prospect of the establishment of an independent Palestinian State.

The hostile environment created by the occupying Power does not encourage an atmosphere conducive to constructive dialogue and peace. The persistent threat to Palestinian's livelihoods through forced evictions and demolitions leads to heightened tensions, sparking a cycle of violence and perpetuating insecurity and instability. Israel's rhetoric and modus operandi bear no resemblance to a bona fide attempt to resolve the protracted conflict. Israel's practices and settlement activities have seriously harmed the human rights of the Palestinian people and other Arabs in the occupied territories. South Africa therefore fully supports the request that the International Court of Justice urgently issue an advisory opinion on Israel's practices and settlement activities, considering the rules and principles of international law, including the Charter of the United Nations, international humanitarian law, international human rights law, the relevant resolutions of the Security Council, General Assembly and Human Rights Council and the advisory opinion of the Court of 9 July 2004.

South Africa is deeply concerned about the increasing levels of violence in the occupied Palestinian territory, especially East Jerusalem, which have resulted in numerous Palestinian casualties. With 2022 on course to be the deadliest year on record for Palestinians in the West Bank, we cannot turn a blind eye to the volatile environment that Palestinians are subjected to. Israel's military aggression calls into question its sense of humanity and empathy. Palestinians are traumatized from repeated cycles of violence. When a Member State claims to be defending its territory by killing, maiming and imprisoning innocent children, it is safe to say that we, as Member States, need to re-evaluate our responsibilities to uphold the Charter and the ideals of the General Assembly. The Israeli military's cold-blooded killing earlier this year of Shireen Abu Akleh once again illustrates the aggression that Palestinians face at the hands of the Israeli authorities. It can never be acceptable to intimidate or create a sense that those who provide information will pay with their lives, instilling a culture of fear and suppressing the truth. The international community cannot look the other way.



In conclusion, South Africa reiterates the dire need to revitalize international action and find new solutions within the international system to address the challenges facing the Palestinian people. We must intensify the call for international action, with the United Nations playing a leading role in finding a solution premised on a just settlement with just, rights-based laws. As the international community, we must seek a solution that facilitates equality and equity for all who have the right to live in the territories of Israel and Palestine. Without that, security, dignity and prosperity will not be achieved.

**Mr. Vongnorkeo** (Lao People's Democratic Republic): My delegation would like to express its sincere gratitude to the Secretary-General for the report (A/77/35), as well as his tireless efforts in favour of a long-overdue solution to the question of Palestine.

To mark the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People yesterday, the President of the Lao People's Democratic Republic reaffirmed his full support for the independence and sovereignty of the State of Palestine and for a peaceful solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, respecting the inalienable rights of Palestinians, including their right to self-determination, as well as for achieving a two-State solution in line with the relevant resolutions and international law.

The question of Palestine remains the longest unresolved issue on the agenda of the United Nations. Over the past seven decades, many meetings have been held and countless resolutions adopted in an effort to ensure that the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people are fully respected. Yet the international community's aspiration for Palestine's independent statehood and freedom has not materialized, while the Palestinian people have continued to encounter socioeconomic and humanitarian challenges. It will therefore be critical for the international community to increase its efforts to enable the Palestinian people to overcome the many difficulties and guarantee their overall safety and well-being.

The situation on the ground remains worrisome and we are deeply concerned about the ongoing conflict and violence in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. The situation in Gaza has also continued to deteriorate as a result of illegal settlement activities and the destruction of property and economic institutions in the occupied Palestinian territory. We once again call on all the parties concerned to do their utmost to avoid further exacerbating an already fragile situation and to take all possible steps to create an environment more conducive to peace and security.

The Lao People's Democratic Republic shares the common desire for lasting peace in the Middle East, which is vital not only to the region but to international peace and security at large. We reaffirm our unwavering support for concerted efforts to address the question of Palestine, the issue of the sovereignty of the State of Palestine and of the Palestinian people in their legitimate quest for dignity, justice and their inalienable right to self-determination in an independent and viable State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, living side by side in peace and security with the State of Israel, within internationally recognized borders.

The Lao People's Democratic Republic commends the continued efforts of the United Nations, especially the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, for its crucial role in building the foundation of hope for the Palestinians.

I wish to conclude by reiterating the firm commitment and support of the Lao People's Democratic Republic for all efforts aimed at achieving a two-State solution that recognizes the legitimate rights and freedom of the Palestinian people.

**Mr. Cherif** (Tunisia) (*spoke in Arabic*): The General Assembly meets today to discuss the agenda item entitled "Question of Palestine" in yet another occasion to confirm the commitment of the international community to firmly supporting the Palestinian question, one that is just and in line with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

Despite the broad international support for the demands of the Palestinian people to end the occupation and regain their legitimate rights, first and foremost their right to self-determination and the establishment of a sovereign independent State, the occupying Power continues to challenge international legitimacy and disdain international law, as it has been doing for decades.

The reports before the General Assembly reflect the continued Israeli violations and deteriorated security, social and economic situation in the occupied Palestinian territories. They also indicate the growing humanitarian suffering that the Palestinian people are experiencing as a result of the occupation and the continued practices, by the occupying Power, of its oppressive, expansionist and aggressive policies in the absence of any form of accountability.

Yesterday, with the rest of the international community, Tunisia commemorated the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People (see A/AC.183/PV.409). On that occasion, the President of the Republic of Tunisia, Mr. Kaïs Saïed, delivered a statement of solidarity with the brotherly Palestinian people, from which I am honoured to cite the following.

“Tunisia reiterates its principled position in support of the brotherly Palestinian people and their legitimate struggle to end occupation and establish an independent and sovereign Palestinian State on their territories, along the 1967 borders and with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.

“Tunisia reaffirms that peace cannot prevail without the return of Palestinian rights, which are not subject to statute of limitations. In the light of the prolonged injustice and the ensuing suffering of the defenceless Palestinian people for over seven decades, Tunisia affirms that the time has come for our Palestinian brothers to regain their full rights, including the rights to self-determination, independence and dignity.

“Moreover, Tunisia expresses its deep satisfaction with the success of the Palestinian Unification Conference held in Algeria in achieving Palestinian national unity, reuniting Palestinian ranks and realizing Palestinian reconciliation as a precondition to confront the occupation, speak with one Palestinian voice before the international community and push forward efforts to achieve a just, comprehensive and lasting solution to the Palestinian question.

“In the light of the current economic and living difficulties in the occupied Palestinian territories, Tunisia encourages all regional and international stakeholders to work on raising the level of the humanitarian response in order to help the Palestinian people confront the repercussions of the economic restrictions that the occupation is imposing, especially in the besieged Gaza Strip, and cope with the effects of the coronavirus disease pandemic and emerging global challenges.

“In that regard, Tunisia commends the vital role of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East in alleviating the suffering of Palestinian refugees and bolstering regional stability. Tunisia reaffirms the need for Palestinian rights to be at the top of the

international agenda, given the responsibility of the international community to guarantee respect for international law and support just causes. In that connection, we call for intensifying and expediting efforts to create the horizons for peace in the Middle East on the basis of resolutions of the international legitimacy and the Arab Peace Initiative.”

In conclusion, Tunisia confirms its support for the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. We value the role of the Committee in helping the Palestinian people regain their usurped rights, including their rights to self-determination, independence and sovereignty over their own territory. As a member of the Committee, my country will continue to contribute to its efforts and programmes, in accordance with its mandate.

**Mrs. Rodrigues-Birkett** (Guyana): At the outset, Guyana wishes to acknowledge the work of Ambassador Cheikh Niang, Permanent Representative of Senegal, and all the members of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and to thank them for the submission of the Committee’s annual report to the General Assembly (A/77/35). My delegation also recognizes the efforts of Secretary-General António Guterres and thanks him for his report (A/76/299) and subsequent note (A/77/295).

We meet again today with the question of Palestine unresolved. Guyana remains deeply concerned that this decades-long conflict continues to deny the Palestinian people the enjoyment of the most basic freedoms, which are guaranteed under international law, including humanitarian and human rights law. The ongoing situation has persistently and consistently contributed to the deterioration of the economic, social and humanitarian conditions of the Palestinian people. The commemoration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People and today’s debate are stark reminders that we have failed and that the settlement of the question of Palestine cannot be delayed indefinitely.

We are concerned about the escalation of violence, which has resulted in deaths, injuries and destruction of infrastructure. Those events will only deepen the stalemate in this protracted crisis. Guyana calls for a cessation of all hostilities and urges the parties to take urgent steps towards resolving the outstanding political issues that are at the heart of the conflict.

It is deeply regrettable that, during the reporting period, the realization of the two-State solution, notwithstanding the prevailing international consensus,

failed to advance. Guyana, like the great majority of countries, strongly believes that the only viable way forward to resolve the question of Palestine is through constructive dialogue and a negotiated two-State solution. The stalled peace process and the lack of new initiatives to advance the Palestinian people's quest for self-determination is therefore deeply concerning. Guyana underscores the immediate need to reverse the substantial economic and social costs of the occupation imposed on the Palestinian people. We call on the international community, even as we pledge our own efforts, to increase and collectively exert all efforts necessary in order to bring an end to the occupation so that our Palestinian brothers and sisters can live in peace and dignity.

Guyana reaffirms its recognition of Palestine as a free, independent and sovereign State, on the basis of its pre-1967 borders, and underscores the urgency of having an independent State of Palestine peacefully coexisting alongside the State of Israel. As a member of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People since 1975, we pledge our unwavering commitment to implementing the recommendations in the Committee's report.

As long as the Palestinian question remains unsolved, our Sustainable Development Goal mantra of "leaving no one behind" will remain an illusion. Guyana therefore encourages all Member States to continue to fulfil their relevant obligations under international law, United Nations resolutions and international agreements related to the question of Palestine in order to contribute to resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

In conclusion, I would like to reaffirm Guyana's long-standing solidarity with, and unequivocal support for, the Palestinian people in their pursuit of justice, dignity and self-determination to exercise their legitimate and inalienable rights.

**Mr. Harib Alsaïd** (Oman) (*spoke in Arabic*): I deliver this statement on behalf of the Sultanate of Oman with regard to the General Assembly's agenda item 33, entitled "Question of Palestine".

I stress the firm position of my country regarding the Palestinian question and its strong support to establishing an independent Palestinian State along June 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, in accordance with the Arab Peace Initiative, the relevant international resolutions and parameters and the two-State solution.

I am pleased to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for the report under discussion today (A/77/35), which confirms the systematic and ongoing violations by the Israeli authorities against the Palestinian people, including women, children and civilians.

The practices of Israeli authorities in the occupied Palestinian territories, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip are a source of concern for the international community. They are illegal practices that run counter to the provisions of international law. The international community must therefore compel the Israeli occupation authorities to respect international law and remind them of their responsibility not to subject the Palestinian people and other Arab residents of occupied territories to such practices.

We also call upon the international community to respond positively to the repeated calls to provide the necessary protection to the Palestinian people living under the yoke of occupation. When the international community does not shoulder its responsibilities, Israel is encouraged to become more extreme and abuse the Palestinian people, who remain steadfast until they enjoy their legitimate and inalienable rights, like other peoples. We call upon Israel, the occupying Power, to immediately cease its colonization, which seeks to change the demographic nature and composition of the occupied Palestinian territories. Those are baseless practices and violations under international law.

The Sultanate of Oman firmly believes in supporting peace efforts and initiatives in the region and the world. My country therefore continues to steadfastly support the legitimate demands and aspirations of the Palestinian people, their human right to self-determination and the establishment of an independent State, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

In conclusion, my country, the Sultanate of Oman, is a peace-loving State. It supports peace and coexistence among all peoples of the world. We believe that a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East is a strategic need that will benefit international peace and security.

**Mr. Kvalheim** (Norway): The question of Palestine was first brought before the General Assembly almost 75 years ago to the day (see A/PV.124). In resolution 181 (II), the Assembly called for the partition of the territory into two States. Today the Middle East is

changing, but sadly the challenges to the realization of the two-State solution remain. The tense situation in the West Bank is, in many ways, the symptom of the lack of a political horizon, but also of fundamental rights. The stalled Israeli Palestinian peace process is not only negatively impacting the people who live there and pay the high-risk price for the lack of a political solution, but the whole region.

Norway continues to believe that a negotiated two-State solution based on the internationally agreed parameters is the best way to achieve lasting peace and ensure the rights and safety of both Israelis and Palestinians. That is also the basis for our chairmanship of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee for the Coordination of International Assistance to Palestinians, the donor group to support Palestinian institution-building and lay the practical foundation for a Palestinian State, and it underpins our membership in the Security Council and, more broadly, the United Nations.

New and reinforced measures are needed to reduce tensions on the ground, particularly in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, in order to stabilize the volatile ceasefire in Gaza and to strengthen the Palestinian Authority. We have repeatedly expressed our deep concern about the continuing expansion of Israeli settlements in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and we are concerned that house demolitions and evictions continued apace. Furthermore, violence perpetrated by settlers against Palestinians has reached an unprecedented scale. Let there be no doubt — the Israeli settlements are illegal under international law and are a significant impediment to a viable two-State solution. We call upon the incoming Israeli Government to reverse the negative trends we have witnessed over the past few years. Moreover, Israel must revise policies and actions that weaken the Palestinian Authority and the Palestinian economy and engage with the Palestinian leadership. We urge respect for international law and signed agreements. De-escalation and cooperation is key. Palestinians deserve democracy and rule of law, with security equal rights and opportunities for all.

A strong Palestinian Authority that enjoys popular legitimacy and represents all of Palestine is vital. The absence of regular national elections weakens the legitimacy of the Palestinian Authority. We urge the Palestinian leadership to continue to implement planned reforms. The Palestinian Authority should follow up on decisions that might be unpopular in the short term but will benefit the Palestinian economy and consolidate

institutions in the long term. Norway also urges Palestinian factions to redouble efforts to reconcile and achieve political and administrative unity.

We see that changes in the region create new opportunities. We appeal to the countries that have improved their relations with Israel to ensure that the newfound cooperation also involves and benefits the Palestinian people.

Furthermore, Norway is concerned about the reduction in foreign assistance to the Palestinians, including to the Palestinian Authority, as it is about the persistent and critical lack of adequate financing for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). There is no alternative to UNRWA for ensuring that the rights and essential needs of the Palestinian refugees are met.

In conclusion, I would like to repeat Norway's commitment to the two-State solution. We call on the parties to commit to a meaningful dialogue and to take concrete action on the basis of existing agreements and the relevant United Nations resolutions. We encourage all supporters of the two-State solution to help bring the parties back to a path towards a lasting agreement. Norway stands ready to support all constructive efforts.

**Mr. Muhith** (Bangladesh): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting on the question of Palestine. I also thank the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for its report (A/77/35) and the Secretary-General for his note (A/77/295) on this agenda item. I also appreciate the continuous support of the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Department of Political And Peacebuilding Affairs for the Committee's mandate. In line with our long-standing and principled position, we co-sponsored all four draft resolutions under this agenda item (A/77/L.23, A/77/L.24, A/77/L.25 and A/77/L.26), and look forward to their successful adoption. Yesterday, alongside the international community, we observed the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian people (see A/AC.183/PV.409) and reiterated our unwavering support for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination and the establishment of the State of Palestine based on a two-State solution, with pre-1967 borders and East Jerusalem as its capital.

This year marks the seventy-fifth anniversary of the General Assembly's adoption of resolution 181 (II) and the fifty-fifth anniversary of illegal Israeli



occupation of Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem and other Arab territories. Regrettably, we have witnessed the continuation of illegal occupation and aggressive and deadly activities against our Palestinian brothers and sisters by the Israeli occupying forces. Despite repeated calls from the international community, including the adoption of numerous resolutions in the General Assembly and the Security Council, violations of international human rights and international humanitarian law by Israeli authorities continue, making the situation perilous. A just solution has remained elusive.

Bangladesh appreciates the work of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. We commend the progress made by the Committee in implementing its planned activities for 2022, especially in the areas of awareness-building; mobilization of the diplomatic community; cooperation with intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and United Nations system entities; and capacity-building of the officials of the State of Palestine. We also commend the work of the Department of Global Communications, particularly for its Special Information Programme on the Question of Palestine.

It is no wonder that the report of the Committee reflects the continuation of killing and injuring Palestinian civilians, including children, through the use of excessive lethal force, continued construction and expansion in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, and the continuation of the air, land and sea blockade of Gaza. The ongoing and systematic violations of international law and United Nations resolutions by the Israeli occupation force is deeply deplorable.

In that regard, we refer to the Committee's call to conduct prompt, independent and impartial investigations into all incidents involving excessive use of force and the loss of Palestinian lives, including the killing of Palestinian Al-Jazeera journalist Shireen Abu Akleh. In addition, Israeli authorities must respect the status quo at the holy sites in Jerusalem, including the historic and legal status quo throughout the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound, and must ensure that Muslims are able to peacefully worship and practice their religion.

Furthermore, we recall that the Committee has urged the Security Council and the General Assembly to ensure the implementation of the long-standing

parameters for peace affirmed in relevant United Nations resolutions, including Security Council resolution 2334 (2016) and General Assembly resolution 74/11, of 2019.

We are deeply concerned about the discriminatory access of the Palestinians to basic services such as education, health care and water, sanitation and electricity infrastructure. The precarious humanitarian situation cannot be fully addressed without a just and viable solution to this crisis. As long as Israel's ongoing illegal activities continue, we will need without fail to ensure the uninterrupted delivery of those basic services to the Palestinians. In that regard, we highlight the importance of providing the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East with predictable, sustained and sufficient funding to assist Palestinian refugees in the five fields of operation, as recommended by the Committee. Generation after generation of Palestinians must not live with continuous displacement, torture and trauma. It is our shared responsibility to ensure a dignified and secure life for them, as well as to remove the ongoing tensions and instability from the region.

The United Nations should come forward to implement its own decisions. In that regard, we refer to the recommendation of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, contained in her latest report (A/77/356) on developing a plan in the General Assembly in order to end the Israeli settler colonial occupation and apartheid regime.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate Bangladesh unwavering commitment to the cause of Palestine and support for the just struggle of our Palestinian brothers and sisters.

**Mr. Alateek** (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to express the appreciation of my country's delegation to the Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, Ambassador Cheikh Niang. I thank him for the report (A/77/35), which we welcome.

The question of Palestine continues to be the oldest cause in the United Nations. Despite the adoption of dozens of resolutions by the Organization on the question of Palestine, the international community has not shown the necessary political will to put an end to the suffering of the Palestinian people, which has lasted for over 70 years.

We would like to reaffirm the legitimate and inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to realizing self-determination and regaining their legitimate rights, including their right to establish their independent State, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital, based on the relevant resolutions adopted by the Security Council and the Arab Peace Initiative, which has set a road map for the definitive settlement within the framework of the two-State solution and the establishment of the Palestinian State along 1967 borders. We also stress that the international community must shoulder its responsibility to compel Israel to respect the resolutions of the international community on ending its occupation of Arab territories in Palestine, the Golan and Lebanon.

It is regrettable that the Israeli occupation authorities continue to violate the rights of the Palestinian people and commit heinous crimes against them, using excessive force against defenceless people. The continued building of Israeli settlements, despite the adoption of many resolutions calling for an end to settlement activity, is a violation and shows clear disregard for the international community. Saudi Arabia therefore calls on the international community to take on its responsibility to protect the Palestinian people and help them to regain their usurped rights. We reiterate our rejection and condemnation of Israel's plans and measures to confiscate Palestinian homes and transfer them to Israeli sovereignty. We also reject the storming of Al-Haram Al-Sharif, which is a violation of its sanctity and an attempt to obliterate its Arab and Islamic identity. Such aggressive Israeli measures undermine the chances for peace.

As the occupying Power, Israel and its policies of settlement building and colonial expansion on Palestinian territory will destroy any possibility for peaceful coexistence. Moreover, its unilateral measures on Palestinian territory will undermine security and

stability, not just in Palestine but in the Middle East in general. The shortest way to achieve security and stability is through a resumption of negotiations on establishing a State of Palestine within the 1967 borders, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital. Historically, the stance of Saudi Arabia and its leaders has always been one of support to a resolution of the Palestinian question and to the Palestinian people, based on the premise that the Palestinian question is a fundamental and essential one in our foreign policy and will remain pivotal until the Palestinian people regain their rights and land and the establishment of a Palestinian State, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital, is realized.

I would like to thank the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) for its tireless efforts, despite the risks and the difficult conditions in the occupied Palestinian territory resulting from the crackdown by the occupation authorities. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia therefore calls for every effort to be made internationally to provide UNRWA with the support it needs to continue to carry out its humanitarian activities in the occupied territory. My country is proud to be one of the world's largest donor countries to UNRWA, demonstrating our willingness to support a settlement of the Palestinian question and the rights of our brother people of Palestine and to meet their basic needs.

In conclusion, I call on all Member States to support and adopt the draft resolutions (A/77/L.23, A/77/L.24, A/77/L.25 and A/77/L.26) submitted by our sister country of Senegal under this agenda item.

**The Acting President:** We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item for this meeting. We shall continue the debate this afternoon at 3 p.m. in this Hall.

*The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.*