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Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

Summary record of the 25th meeting

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Chair: Mr. Pérez Ayestarán (Vice-Chair) (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela)

Contents

Agenda item 50: Israeli practices and settlement activities affecting the rights of the Palestinian people and other Arabs of the occupied territories (*continued*)

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In the absence of Ms. Joyini (South Africa), Mr. Pérez Ayestarán (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

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

Agenda item 50: Israeli practices and settlement activities affecting the rights of the Palestinian people and other Arabs of the occupied territories
(continued) (A/78/502, A/78/529, A/78/553 and A/78/554)

1. **Mr. Baghaei Hamaneh** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the findings set out in the report of the Secretary-General on Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the occupied Syrian Golan (A/78/554) illustrated the horrific experiences of Palestinians in the occupied territories. Many people had been forcibly evicted from their homes due to systematic demolitions, which constituted egregious human rights violations. Violent incidents committed by Israeli settlers against Palestinians, particularly women and children, had increased over the previous year, and were usually accompanied or backed by Israeli forces. Such incidents included the destruction of homes, natural resources, hospitals and schools.

2. The mandate of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories must be supported in order to further raise awareness of illegal Israeli activities and mobilize international action to end such violations of basic human rights. The Israeli regime should be urged to address its accountability deficits and respond promptly to the requests of the Special Committee.

3. Over the previous month, Israeli forces had bombarded the Gaza Strip, destroying homes and civilian infrastructure and systematically violating human rights, international law and international humanitarian law. The blockade of Gaza was both illegal and inhumane, and must be lifted immediately. Any acts that amounted to collective punishment must cease. The General Assembly should condemn the military aggression and ethnic cleansing undertaken by Israel and adopt measures to hold it accountable for its war crimes and crimes against humanity. His delegation categorically condemned any use or threat of use of nuclear weapons by Israelis against any nation in the region.

4. A ceasefire must be concluded as a matter of priority, followed by immediate and comprehensive action to facilitate the reconstruction of Gaza,

something that would require the provision of adequate resources, unobstructed humanitarian aid and reconstruction materials. Israel should contribute to that process, and be held liable for war reparations. All Member States should work towards mobilizing international assistance to support the return of Palestine refugees. His country remained steadfast in supporting the Palestinian people in their legitimate resistance against the occupation and in their quest to exercise the right to self-determination and establish a sovereign State with Al-Quds al-Sharif (Jerusalem) as its capital.

5. The Syrian Golan was an integral part of the Syrian Arab Republic. The Islamic Republic of Iran strongly condemned the Israeli attacks and restrictions that had resulted in the death and injury of Syrian citizens and the demolition of their infrastructure. The decision taken by Israel to impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration in the occupied Syrian Golan was null and void and without international legal effect.

6. **Mr. Al-Dahlaki** (Iraq) said that continued aggression by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people demonstrated its disregard for international law and relevant United Nations resolutions. Iraq rejected all racist laws and military actions carried out by the occupying Power aimed at creating a new status quo in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The occupation must be ended and an independent, sovereign and contiguous Palestinian State established within the borders of 4 June 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital. His delegation condemned the indiscriminate bombardment and systematic detention of Palestinian civilians; the ongoing illegal Israeli blockade on the Gaza Strip; the intentional targeting of women, children and older persons in air raids; the targeting of schools, hospitals, places of worship and infrastructure; and the denial of humanitarian aid and medical assistance. His delegation called on the international community, especially the Security Council, to implement all United Nations resolutions concerning the protection of the Palestinian people and the granting of their inalienable rights. In particular, the Security Council should implement resolution 2334 (2016), which called upon Israel, the occupying Power, to cease all settlement activities, which undermined the two State solution; all illegal and provocative unilateral measures to construct and expand illegal settlements; the killing of innocents; the repeated invasion of Palestinian cities and towns; the confiscation of land and property; the demolition of Palestinian buildings and the expulsion of the original inhabitants, including in Al Quds al-Sharif; and the flagrant violation of the Aqsa Mosque/Haram al-Sharif by the Israeli occupation army and extremist settler groups.

7. Iraq condemned the occupation since 1967 of the Syrian Arab Golan as a threat to regional and global peace and security and reaffirmed the authoritative international resolutions, which asserted that the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 applied to the occupied Syrian Arab Golan and considered the imposition by Israel, the occupying Power, of its laws, jurisdiction and administration in the Golan to be null and void and without international legal effect.

8. **Mr. Alajmi** (Kuwait) said that the term “Israeli practices” in the title of the agenda item would be better worded as “Israeli violations”. The term “practices” could have positive connotations; but the actions of the occupying entity had been solely negative. The events under way amounted to a genocide. The United Nations had been born from the failure of the League of Nations, but it now found itself unable to do the right thing. Had the victims not been Palestinian, the international community would surely have reacted differently. All delegates should set aside their political positions and focus on basic human values.

9. It was difficult to think of a people stronger or more resilient than the Palestinians. Although many had lost everything and seen their own children die, their commitment to their cause was unshaken. Opinions might differ, but the fact remained that the occupying entity was resorting to collective punishment, and recent events could leave nobody unmoved. Since 2015, the General Assembly had adopted 140 resolutions condemning Israel, and not a single resolution condemning the State of Palestine. Try as it might, the occupying entity could not conceal the fact that it was committing war crimes and crimes against humanity, and that it was in deliberate standing violation of the Charter of the United Nations, international law and international humanitarian law.

10. The Palestinian people, and the Arab world as a whole, had gone to great lengths to bring about peaceful coexistence and a two-State solution. The arrogance of the occupying entity had prevented that outcome. Indeed, a minister in its Government had now proposed dropping an atomic bomb on the Gaza Strip. That minister had now been temporarily suspended but remained in his post. Rather than merely working for peace, which did not necessarily mean an end to injustice, the international community should aim to genuine liberation. In so doing, it should be inspired by the example of the Palestinian people.

11. **Mr. Jassim Abdulaziz Al-thani** (Qatar) said that the violations of international law committed by the Israeli occupation had now entered a new phase. More than 10,000 civilians, most of them women and

children, had now been killed, and hospitals, schools and residential buildings were being targeted. A policy of collective punishment had been adopted: civilians had been ordered to evacuate the northern Gaza Strip, and attempts were being made to forcibly displace the Palestinian people from the Gaza Strip, something that would violate international law. His Government strongly condemned statement made by an Israeli minister calling for an atomic bomb to be dropped on Gaza. The current Israeli advance into the Gaza Strip was particularly alarming, as it would endanger the lives of civilians and hostages, undermine efforts to conclude a truce, and have a cataclysmic effect on the humanitarian situation and on regional security and stability. In view of the current escalation, the international community must mobilize swiftly to protect Palestinian civilians in the Gaza Strip.

12. Israeli practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and other occupied Arab territories violated international law. Israel was confiscating property and demolishing homes, and its settlements in the occupied territories violated international law and hindered the realization of a two-State solution. The status quo in Al-Quds al-Sharif and the Islamic and Christian holy places must not be compromised. The Israeli decision to impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration in the occupied Syrian Arab Golan was null and void and without international legal effect. It was essential to implement General Assembly resolution [ES-10/21](#) calling for an immediate, durable and sustained humanitarian truce leading to a cessation of hostilities; the protection of humanitarian facilities; the provision of essential goods and services; and the establishment of humanitarian corridors. For its part, Qatar would continue its diplomatic efforts to find an outcome that would spare Palestinian lives and bring about a durable political solution in accordance with the accepted terms of reference. The only guarantee of lasting peace in the region would be a just and comprehensive solution to the question of Palestine, including the establishment of an independent State of Palestine on the borders of 4 June 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

13. **Mr. Baghdadi** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that, owing to the savage crimes committed by Israel since 7 October 2023, whole families had been wiped out and residential areas had been razed to the ground. Even hospitals had not been spared. Israel was cutting off the access of the Gaza Strip to such essential items as electricity, water, fuel and medicine. Some 16 medical facilities had been put out of action; communications and Internet service were regularly interrupted; and Israel was attempting to forcibly displace Palestinians.

Those actions amounted to war crimes, crimes against humanity, ethnic cleansing and genocide.

14. The collective position of the West was to claim, falsely, that the Zionist entity had a right to self-defence. As the International Court of Justice had shown, it had no such right, because it was an occupying State. The invocation of Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations was thus spurious, and ultimately meant giving Israeli fascists free rein to inflict collective punishment on the Palestinian people to punish them for their legitimate struggle for self-determination.

15. An Israeli minister had recently compared Palestinians to human animals. Israel was now showing its true racist face, unadorned by the hypocrisy of Western officials or the lies of the Western media, which sought to portray it as an oasis of democracy in the Middle East. Similarly, the so-called minister of culture of Israel had proposed dropping an atomic bomb on the Gaza Strip. As well as illustrating the unhinged racism of the Israeli entity, that statement confirmed that Israel, with the collusion of its Western allies, had acquired nuclear weapons that were not subject to international monitoring.

16. Israeli settlement activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory had now escalated to an unprecedented degree. Settlers continued to kill Palestinians, set fire to their homes and desecrate their holy sites with unconditional support from the occupation authorities. The Syrian Arab Republic condemned the continuing construction and expansion by Israel of settlements throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including within and around occupied East Jerusalem and in the occupied Syrian Golan. It called for a complete and immediate halt to all illegal measures and activities in accordance with international law and relevant United Nations resolutions, including Security Council resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#).

17. Since the beginning of the Israeli occupation of the Syrian Golan, the occupation authorities had tried to alter its legal and political status through systematic human rights violations, such as its attempt in 1981 to impose Israeli citizenship on Syrians in the Golan and its illegitimate decision in 2018 to conduct “local elections” in the occupied Syrian Golan, which the Syrian population had thwarted. Israel had pursued policies of terrorism, oppression, racial discrimination and arbitrary detention against Syrian citizens and had infringed their right to communicate with Syria, their mother country.

18. The occupation authorities had violated the right of the inhabitants of the Syrian Golan to build homes on

their land, and had demolished such homes on the pretext that permits had not been obtained. They had forced Syrians in the Golan to register land inherited from their fathers and grandfathers with the Israeli authorities under penalty of confiscation. They had seized more than three quarters of the area of the occupied Syrian Golan and had diverted most of it from agriculture to military facilities, settlements and toxic waste landfills which had led to an unprecedented rise in cancer. They had plundered the oil and gas resources of the Golan and had taken control of its aquifers, diverting water for the benefit of Israeli settlers while preventing the inhabitants of the occupied Syrian Golan from using it. Israel also violated the right of the inhabitants to sell their agricultural products in Syria.

19. The settler population in the occupied Golan was projected to increase by 23,000 before 2027. On 20 June 2023, Israel had commenced work on 23 wind turbines in orchards near the towns of Majdal Shams and Mas’adah in the occupied Syrian Golan. Israeli police had provided on-site protection for the work. Settlement expansion and such commercial activity as the construction of wind turbines, which could potentially have a detrimental effect on the health of the population of the occupied Syrian Golan, further worsened the overall human rights situation and continued to limit the Syrian population’s access to land and water, in violation of a wide range of their human rights, including the rights to food, health and adequate housing.

20. The Syrian Arab Republic reiterated its firm commitment to the restoration in full of the Syrian Golan and affirmed that all decisions and measures taken by Israel, the occupying Power, to alter its natural and demographic features or to impose Israeli laws and authority and administration over it, were null and void and without international legal effect under international law and United Nations resolutions, in particular Security Council resolution [497 \(1981\)](#).

21. **Ms. Rios** (Plurinational State of Bolivia) said that, since the creation of the State of Israel in 1948, the issue of the occupied territories had been a central element of multiple conflicts and wars, and the establishment of Israeli settlements had engendered tensions and claimed thousands of innocent lives. Having benefited from the resolution establishing its existence as a State, Israel as an occupying Power had ignored all other United Nations resolutions, disrespecting the international community and undermining the development of international law. The expansion of Israeli settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem significantly undermined the rights of the Palestinian people and was an impediment to peace.

22. In recent days, the disproportionate and indiscriminate attack against innocent Palestinian civilians and civilian infrastructure had led to the loss of over 10,000 lives, the majority of whom were women and children. The inhumane aggression of the Israeli authorities, not to mention their threat to launch a nuclear bomb against the Palestinian people, beggared belief. The Security Council must send a clear and strong message to end the genocide, and the International Criminal Court should take formal action in accordance with the Rome Statute. The only way to guarantee lasting peace and security in the region was through full recognition of the State of Palestine on its pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

23. **Mr. Geng Shuang** (China) said that since the outbreak of the new round in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, 2.3 million innocent civilians were languishing amidst indiscriminate bombardments and a lack of basic supplies. The indiscriminate use of force was unacceptable, and civilian facilities such as hospitals, schools and refugee camps must not become military targets. The safety of United Nations staff and humanitarian and medical workers must be guaranteed. The parties to the conflict should heed the overwhelming call of the international community for a ceasefire, and Israel, the occupying Power, should fulfil its obligations under international law. His delegation firmly rejected the forced displacement of the Palestinian population and called for the immediate lifting of the evacuation order for northern Gaza.

24. As had been highlighted by the Secretary-General, the current situation had not taken place in a vacuum. The Palestinian people had been subjected to more than half a century of Israeli occupation, and continued expansion of settlements had made an independent, sovereign and contiguous Palestinian State even more elusive. In the light of the deteriorating humanitarian situation, Israel must stop violating Security Council resolution 2334 (2016), end all settlement activities, stop the deportation of Palestinians and the intensifying settler violence, and move towards the two-State solution as soon as possible. The international community must address the root causes of the issue, and refrain from using piecemeal crisis management in lieu of a comprehensive and just solution for the Palestinian people. As the current President of the Security Council, China would maintain close communications with all parties concerned.

25. **Mr. Habashneh** (Jordan) said that his Government condemned in the strongest terms the Israeli atrocities in the Gaza Strip including, most recently, the attacks on the Jabalia camp and the Shifa' Hospital. Israel, the occupying Power, bore full

responsibility for those actions. Since 7 October 2023, Israel had indiscriminately targeted civilians, civilian facilities, hospitals, places of worship and United Nations premises; had cut off access to food, water, electricity and fuel; and was forcibly displacing the population. Those actions amounted to grave violations of international law. They were not self-defence and would not deliver security or stability for Israel; on the contrary, they had brought the region to the brink of the abyss.

26. The international community must put pressure on Israel to allow the immediate, sufficient and durable delivery of humanitarian assistance. It must ensure the supply of basic services, protect the civilian population, and prevent the displacement of Palestinians from their homeland, a step that would export the crisis to neighbouring States. A ceasefire must be declared immediately, and General Assembly resolution [ES-10/21](#) must be enforced. Israel could not be allowed to disregard international law; it must be prevailed upon to end its barbaric attack on the Gaza Strip. His Government condemned the racist and provocative statements made by Israeli Government ministers, including the proposal of dropping an atomic bomb on the Gaza Strip, something that amounted to a hate crime and a call for genocide. Such statements were admissions that Israel was violating international law and international humanitarian law.

27. His Government condemned the ongoing escalation in the West Bank and the terrorist attacks carried out by Israeli settlers against Palestinian civilians. A just, comprehensive and lasting peace must be declared, including the establishment of an independent, sovereign Palestinian State with East Jerusalem as its capital, on the borders of 4 June 1967, side by side with Israel in peace and security, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions and the Arab Peace initiative.

28. **Mr. Van Schalkwyk** (South Africa) said that events in the Occupied Palestinian Territory over the previous 30 days had demonstrated the urgency of the work of the Committee. Member States had a responsibility to insist that all States, including Israel, implemented General Assembly resolution [ES-10/21](#), and to chart a path towards a two-State solution. The unprecedented violence, death and destruction endured by Palestinians were a direct result of the continued occupation by Israel of Palestinian land. In order to entrench the domination of Israelis over Palestinians, Israel was institutionalizing a regime of systematic oppression. The hallmarks of the crimes of apartheid were clearly identified in the relevant reports, including those compiled by Amnesty International and Human

Rights Watch. South Africa strongly condemned the intensification of settlement expansion, which was undermining the two-State solution. Israeli settlements were a flagrant violation of international law and Security Council resolution 2334 (2016), and the situation of genocide in Gaza was a matter of grave concern. Israel must be held legally and politically accountable for the violence and suffering which its occupation inflicted on the Palestinian people. The international community must work tirelessly to press for an immediate and unconditional end to the illegal occupation of Palestine by Israel.

29. **Mr. Al Kahtani** (Saudi Arabia) said that it was essential to declare a ceasefire and put a stop to all Israeli military operations in the Gaza Strip. His delegation condemned in the strongest terms the ongoing Israeli crimes against the Palestinian people, including the use of internationally prohibited weapons, the denial of medical assistance and the targeting of schools, hospitals, places of worship and infrastructure. Such actions shocked the conscience of humanity, and the perpetrators must be held accountable. The supply of food, water, fuel and electricity to the Gaza Strip must be restored immediately. The international community should protect all civilians, regardless of nationality, and should assist the State of Palestine in its efforts to ensure that justice was done. Any endeavour to displace the Palestinian people from Gaza and export the crisis to neighbouring States must be resisted.

30. In accordance with United Nations resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative, a Palestinian State should be established with East Jerusalem as its capital, and the rights of refugees should be upheld. Saudi Arabia rejected the escalation of forcible evictions in Jerusalem; attempts to alter the legal status and demographic composition of the city; attempts to impose Israeli sovereignty over the Islamic holy places; and the repeated incursions by Israeli settlers into the Haram al-Sharif with the support, protection and participation of the Israeli occupation authorities. Saudi Arabia rejected Israeli settlement policies in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including annexation, the construction and expansion of settlements, the forcible eviction of the Palestinian inhabitants, and the destruction of their property.

31. Saudi Arabia condemned in the strongest possible terms the extremist statements made by an Israeli minister who had suggested dropping an atomic bomb on the Gaza Strip. That statement illustrated the unhinged extremism of the current Israeli Government. The fact that the minister had been suspended but not dismissed was a testament to that Government's

contempt for all human, ethical, religious and legal values.

32. Saudi Arabia remained committed to the Palestinian cause and continued to believe that the imposition by Israel, the occupying Power, of its laws, jurisdiction and administration on the Golan was null, void and without international legal effect.

33. **Mr. Kedar** (Israel) said that in previous sessions, his delegation had focused on demonstrating the one-sided and biased nature of the Special Committee, whose reports were based on repeated lies, half-truths and accusations that were too often accepted without even basic examination of the facts. However, following the brutal and barbaric attack on Israel by Hamas on 7 October 2023, it would be a disgrace to the memory of all those murdered and a dishonour to all the hostages in Gaza if business were to carry on as usual. Despite the extent of the horrific carnage, slaughter and bloodshed of so many innocent Israelis, there was no expectation that the United Nations would establish a committee to investigate the crimes of Hamas; for decades, it had focused solely on disseminating destructive Palestinian propaganda, in complete disregard for the brutality of Hamas against both Israelis and Palestinians.

34. Had such a committee been established, it would have found clear evidence of Hamas policies that systematically violated the human rights of the Israeli people, including the use of rape as a weapon of war, which could amount to a war crime, a crime against humanity or a constitutive act of genocide according to Security Council resolution 1820 (2008). Such a committee would have been briefed on the Hamas Covenant, which stated that Israel would continue to exist until Islam obliterated it. Hamas authorities intended for the whole territory of Israel to become part of a Palestinian State, even though the annihilation of an independent State would contravene international law. Such a committee would have deplored the Hamas attack of 7 October 2023 and noted the ongoing rocket fire launched from Gaza, one-fifth of which had misfired and exploded within the Gaza Strip, injuring and killing Palestinians. It would have noted that the President of the Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abbas, had not condemned the most horrific and extensive attack on Jews since the Holocaust. It would have condemned the massacre of over 1,400 people, including older persons, some of whom were Holocaust survivors, and women, children, and even babies. The committee would have met survivors of the attack and Israeli Government officials, who would have produced evidence that many of those murdered had been tortured, burned alive and, in some cases, beheaded. It

would have noted that more than 4,500 people had been injured and around 240 had been kidnapped and held hostage in Gaza, including women, children and babies. It would have condemned the continued firing of over 9,000 rockets on Israeli civilian populated areas from Gaza, Lebanon, Syria and Yemen by Hamas, Hizbullah and other Iranian proxies.

35. Such a Committee would have deplored the fact that Iran funded, trained and armed Hamas, Hizbullah and the Houthis. Lastly, it would have thanked the Government of Israel for hosting the visit, and commended the Israeli human rights defenders and humanitarian workers who had assisted the families of victims and displaced persons. However, the United Nations did not value the lives of Israelis, and no body of the Organization had accurately reported on the terrible events of 7 October 2023 in southern Israel. In order to protect cultural development and humanity itself, it was necessary to destroy Hamas.

36. **Mr. Nishiyama** (Japan) said that Japan unequivocally condemned the brutal terror attacks on Israel by Hamas that had begun on 7 October 2023, and demanded the immediate and unconditional release of the remaining hostages. The international community should never tolerate such heinous acts. His delegation was also gravely concerned by the deteriorating humanitarian situation and damage to civilian infrastructure in the Gaza Strip. Access must be given for rapid, safe and unhindered humanitarian access to reach the people of Gaza, who were currently facing a catastrophic situation.

37. Japan had recently approved a \$10 million aid package as part of its response to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Flash Appeal for the Occupied Palestinian Territory 2023, and called on all Member States and humanitarian partners to do more to help those in Gaza. The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan had recently announced additional humanitarian aid amounting to \$65 million, to be provided through the Japan International Cooperation Agency. The international community had a responsibility to work together towards a stable and durable peace in both Palestine and Israel. Japan remained unwavering in its support for a two-State solution whereby Israel and a future independent Palestinian State could live side by side in peace and security.

38. **Mr. Wood** (United States of America) said that the status quo of the current crisis was both untenable and unacceptable, including the terrorization of Israel and use of Palestinian civilians as human shields by Hamas, as well as the attacks and terrorization of Palestinians in

the West Bank by violent extremist settlers. A vision was needed for the future beyond the current crisis. It should be centred around a two-State solution, supported by the concerted efforts of Israelis, Palestinians, regional partners and global leaders.

39. His delegation supported equal measures of security and prosperity for Israelis and Palestinians, and recognized the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people, who were in no way represented by Hamas. On 7 October 2023, Hamas had killed over 1,400 civilians and taken over 200 people hostage, including citizens from dozens of Member States, and Gaza-based militants continued to fire barrages of rockets towards Israel. The acts of terror by Hamas were fuelled by single-minded and sickening goals that included the destruction of Israel and the killing of Jews, and must be condemned. Hamas had never cared about the genuine needs or safety of the people it claimed to represent, nor did it have any respect for the rule of law or human life. To Hamas, Palestinian civilians were expendable human shields, an attitude that was both despicable and cowardly.

40. The lives of all civilians, whether Israeli or Palestinian, must be protected equally. The United States had reiterated to Israel that, while it had the right and responsibility to defend its citizens from terrorism, it must do so in a manner consistent with international humanitarian law. The fact that Hamas operated within civilian areas created an added burden for Israel, but it did not diminish the responsibility of that country to distinguish between terrorists and civilians. His delegation condemned the killing of Palestinian civilians and was deeply concerned by the significant uptick in violence that they faced in the West Bank. Israel must prevent such attacks by working with the Palestinian Authority.

41. His Government had expressed its support for humanitarian pauses in the fighting to allow the release of hostages, the distribution of humanitarian aid and safe passage for civilians. All Member States should also work to prevent any spillover of the crisis. There were no shortcuts to statehood, which would be possible only through direct discussions between the parties. Efforts must be redoubled to counter extremism and terrorism with a view to preserving a horizon of hope for a negotiated two-State solution. One-sided United Nations resolutions that ignored the facts on the ground would not help to advance peace, and were purely rhetorical documents that sought division at a time when unity was needed. Several of the draft resolutions before the Fourth Committee were detrimental to that vision and were thus deeply flawed. Nonetheless, the United States would continue to work with all Member States

to chart a future in which Israelis and Palestinians had equal measures of security, freedom, justice opportunity and dignity, and in which Palestinians realized their legitimate right to self-determination and a state of their own.

42. **Ms. Jerbaoui** (Morocco) said that, four weeks after the outbreak of hostilities, civilians continued to be targeted. Tens of thousands of civilians had been killed or injured or were missing. Places of worship, hospitals, refugee camps and civilian areas were being targeted indiscriminately. More than one million people had been displaced. The inhabitants of the Gaza Strip were being denied access to water, electricity and fuel, resulting in a catastrophic humanitarian situation. All military operations must cease, and adequate humanitarian assistance must be provided urgently. For its part, her Government had sent emergency humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian people.

43. Morocco rejected any endeavour to displace the Palestinian people, something that would pose a threat to the national security of neighbouring States. It wholeheartedly supported the right of the Palestinian people, under international law, to establish an independent and viable State of Palestine on the borders of 4 June 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital, side by side with Israel. It was essential to embark on a genuine peace process with that goal in mind. As chair of the Al-Quds Committee, her Government emphasized the need to refrain from any measure aimed at changing the legal and historic status quo of Jerusalem. As was stated in the Appeal for Jerusalem signed by King Mohammed VI of Morocco and Pope Francis, the holy city must continue to be a place where the three monotheistic faiths could meet and coexist peacefully. Her Government remained prepared to liaise with all parties to end the current tragic situation and resume negotiations.

44. **Mr. Hamed** (Libya) said that Libya condemned in the strongest possible terms the ongoing Israeli attack on the Gaza Strip and the targeting of innocent civilians, the sick, medical staff and journalists. Those actions were the latest episodes in the genocide of the Palestinian people. Notwithstanding its domestic crises, the Libyan people wholeheartedly supported the just cause of the Palestinian people and their right to exercise self-determination and establish an independent, sovereign State of Palestine with Al-Quds al-Sharif as its capital. The current alarming escalation was the inevitable outcome of the apartheid policies enacted by the occupation authorities, which bore responsibility for the reaction of the Palestinian resistance against systematic settlement activities and regular raids on the Aqsa Mosque. The Palestinian

people had a right to defend themselves against repeated, bare-faced Israeli attacks on civilians, schools, hospitals and infrastructure; the forced displacement of civilians; the confiscation of land; and the construction and expansion of settlements. It was now clear to all freedom-loving peoples how certain States were engaging in double standards and victim-blaming. The question of Palestine could not be reduced to the events of 7 October 2023. Instead, it was important to consider the origins of the conflict; the enduring Israeli violations and settlement policies, which had snuffed out a 75-year dream of peace; and the unjust blockade that had made Gaza into the world's largest open prison.

45. Current events in Gaza had laid bare the hypocrisy of certain States, which claimed to defend human rights yet could not so much as condemn the senseless violence, let alone bring a stop to it. Those States were now effectively becoming accomplices to actions that amounted to war crimes. However, the demonstrations around the world in support of the Palestinian people showed that the peoples of the world could no longer be fooled. Israel was denying food, water, electricity and communications to defenceless civilians, placing hundreds of thousands of lives at risk. Members of its Government had described Palestinians as human animals and proposed dropping a nuclear bomb on the Gaza Strip. It was now attempting to commit ethnic cleansing. Those actions must come to an immediate halt. The international community should remind the occupying Power of its obligations and prevail on it to end the occupation and refrain from attacking Muslim and Christian holy sites. An independent State of Palestine must be established, with Al-Quds al-Sharif as its capital, and a comprehensive and lasting peaceful solution to the question of Palestine must be found.

46. **Mr. Jardali** (Lebanon) said that the crimes of the Israeli war machine could not be justified under any pretext. An immediate ceasefire must be declared; unhindered access must be granted for the delivery of humanitarian assistance in sufficient quantities; and the forced displacement of Palestinians must be stopped.

47. Lebanon condemned the Israeli policy of refusing to cooperate with the Special Committee. Successive reports of the Special Committee and of the Secretary-General had laid bare an escalating pattern of systematic violations. Without fear of being held accountable, and without regard for international resolutions, Israel was endeavouring to create geographic and demographic facts on the ground. Such practices were reflected in the daily experiences of Palestinians, including lengthy delays at checkpoints, restrictions on freedom of movement, the desecration of holy sites, the denial of construction permits, the destruction of homes and

schools, murders, settlement activities and the expropriation of Palestinian national resources, all of which amounted to war crimes. Most recently, the Palestinian activist Ahed Tamimi had been detained on suspicion of incitement to terrorism, a vague charge which the occupation authorities could interpret however it suited them.

48. As was detailed in the report of the Secretary-General on Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the occupied Syrian Golan (A/78/554), thousands of new settlement units had been constructed. Such activities contravened the relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolution 2334 (2016), and undermined any prospect for peace. The occupation authorities denied building permits to Palestinians, forced them to demolish their homes, and forcibly displaced them, all the while granting others absolute freedom to appropriate land, live on it and exploit its resources. According to paragraph 32 of the report, Palestinians could apply for building permits in only 0.6 per cent of area C, which accounted for 60 per cent of the occupied West Bank, and fewer than 1 per cent of requests for permits were approved. As was stated in paragraph 49 of the report, significant settler violence continued to emanate from settler outposts. Settler attacks and daily harassment from outposts appeared to be designed to terrorize Palestinians, make their lives unbearable and take over their land. In the occupied Syrian Golan, the occupation authorities continued to discriminate against Syrians and to appropriate natural resources.

49. Israel continued to violate the sovereignty of Lebanon. On 5 November 2023, an Israeli drone had attacked a civilian car as it fled the Israeli bombardment of southern Lebanon. Three girls had been killed along with their grandmother, and their mother had been injured. That crime was only the latest of a long list of violations. Israel continued to occupy parts of Lebanon, namely the Kafr Shuba hills, the Shab'a Farms and the outskirts of the town of Mari, part of which included the expanded part of the town of Ghajar. Israel must be prevailed upon to refrain from violating international law, withdraw from all occupied territory and comply with the relevant Security Council resolutions.

50. **Ms. Aljalaha** (Bahrain) said that a ceasefire must be declared and the peace process must resume with a view to enabling the Palestinian people to exercise self-determination and establish an independent, sovereign State of Palestine on the borders of 4 June 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital, as part of a two-State solution in accordance with the Arab Peace Initiative and the relevant resolutions of the United Nations. In order for there to be a

comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region, Israel must withdraw from all the Arab territories occupied in 1967, including the occupied Syrian Golan.

51. Bahrain strongly condemned the escalating Israeli war on the Gaza Strip, which had created a catastrophic humanitarian situation and constituted a grave violation of international law. The international community must take a united stand against the killing of civilian, particularly women, children and the elderly, whose deaths would merely create a new generation eager for vengeance. The international community must fulfil its responsibility to uphold General Assembly resolution ES-10/21. Bahrain continued to reject the blockade on the Gaza Strip and the displacement of Palestinians in Gaza. If the current escalation continued, the repercussions for the region would be alarming. All parties must join forces to contain the crisis and lay the foundations for peace through dialogue and negotiations.

52. **Mr. Polyanskiy** (Russian Federation) said that the current escalation of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict had thus far resulted in a heavy human toll, tens of thousands of wounded and the internal displacement of a large proportion of the population in the Gaza Strip. The ongoing full-scale ground operation by the Israeli armed forces and large-scale bombing targeted civilian infrastructure, exacerbating the situation and impeding efforts to find a just solution to the question of Palestine. The situation was also becoming dangerous in the West Bank, with escalating violence between the Arab population and Israeli security forces, pogroms by Israeli settlers and the forced displacement of Palestinians.

53. Ongoing unilateral measures by Israel, ostensibly in exercise of the right of self-defence, aimed at irreversibly changing the situation on the ground, had had a destabilizing effect and were in large part to blame for the current crisis. In fact, there was no connection between the right of self-defence and the construction of settlements, the eviction of peaceful Palestinians and the destruction of their homes. The occupation by Israel of the Syrian Golan and its constant strikes along the Lebanon-Israel border were additional contributing factors.

54. Responsibility for the tragic situation rested primarily with the Western countries, in particular the United States, which had undermined cooperation within the Middle East Quartet. Instead, the United States was promoting its own geopolitical interests and relying on so-called direct diplomacy with Israel to reconcile it with selected regional players without taking the Palestinian issue into account. An immediate

ceasefire and the delivery of humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip were required as a matter of urgency, followed by an immediate resumption of the political process involving both Palestinians and Israelis. The two-State solution to the conflict, with Palestine and Israel coexisting in peace and security within the 1967 borders, was the only option possible. As a permanent member of the Security Council, the Russian Federation would work actively towards achieving that goal.

55. **Ms. Al-Ali** (United Arab Emirates) said that the current alarming escalation had not begun in the previous month. In the West Bank, the previous two years had been the bloodiest in two decades. The practices of Israel over that period, including its repeated encroachments on the Aqsa Mosque, violated international law and undermined the two-State solution. It was essential to de-escalate the situation and end the blockade on the Gaza Strip and the bombardment of targets including schools, mosques, churches, hospitals and United Nations premises. The Gaza Strip now faced an acute shortage of basic necessities, including food, water, electricity and fuel. The war and the policy of collective punishment must be stopped, and humanitarian supplies must be delivered safely, sufficiently and without hindrance. Civilians, particularly children, must be protected in accordance with international law.

56. Her delegation was concerned at the escalating destruction of Palestinian property and the confiscation of Palestinian land. Action must be taken to prevent the displacement of Palestinians, which could result in a second Nakbah. In accordance with Security Council resolution 2334 (2016), Israel should fulfil its legal responsibility to stop the expansion of settlements, curb settler violence, and preserve the legal and historical status quo of Jerusalem and the custodianship of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan over the Islamic and Christian holy sites there. A genuine and credible peace process should resume, leading to a two-State solution and the establishment of an independent sovereign State of Palestine on the borders of 4 June 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions, the Arab Peace Initiative and the accepted terms of reference. Action should also be taken to combat intolerance and hate speech, in accordance with Security Council resolution 2686 (2023).

57. **Ms. Elardja Flitti** (Observer for the League of Arab States) said that Israel had crossed every red line set by the international community without facing even the slightest accountability. Israeli settlement policies contravened international law and Security Council resolution 2334 (2016). Israel blatantly violated the

sanctity of holy places, particularly the Aqsa Mosque and Christian holy sites. In order to cover up its savage crimes, it had ramped up its attacks on journalists. In the Occupied Palestinian Territory, the occupied Syrian Golan and the occupied parts of Lebanon, Israel continued to confiscate land, destroy harvests and commit daily violations amounting to apartheid. The absence of any prospect of genuine peace, along with the escalation of illegal Israeli prospects, had led to mounting despair and frustration among Palestinians. Israel continued to enjoy the protection of certain international powers, and the United Nations remained unable to afford any genuine protection to the Palestinian people.

58. The conflagration of 7 October 2023 was one episode in a cycle of violence sparked by the Israeli stranglehold on the Palestinian people. The extremist Israeli occupation authorities persistently sought to impose facts on the ground. The international community should take a determined stand against such practices. In so doing, it had an opportunity to shore up the United Nations and the multilateral system. The Secretary-General was playing a pivotal role in upholding international law, and the General Assembly had adopted a landmark resolution for that purpose. However, Israel continued to be protected by certain powers on the Security Council, which mischaracterized its military operations as self-defence. For his part, the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States had rejected the notion that Israel was waging a war on terrorism. Palestinian resistance to occupation could not be called terrorism, and it was ultimately a result of the illegal practices of the Israeli occupation.

59. Since the outset of the current crisis, the League had called for an immediate ceasefire, the unrestricted delivery of humanitarian assistance and the protection of civilians. It had rejected the displacement of Palestinians within Gaza or to neighbouring States. Clear prospects should be created for a peace process conducive to a two-State solution and the establishment of an independent Palestinian State. That solution should be consistent with the Arab Peace Initiative and the “land for peace” principle, as opposed to the “peace for peace” principle which Israel had sought to impose through the Abraham Accords Peace Agreement in a flagrant endeavour to perpetuate the occupation of Arab land and impose a military solution.

60. Pending genuine negotiations between the two parties, the international community should endeavour to bring an end to the Israeli war on the Gaza Strip; hold Israel to account for targeting humanitarian, educational and medical infrastructure, and hold it responsible for reconstruction; curb the settlement activities of Israel;

call on United Nations humanitarian, legal and human rights entities to implement General Assembly resolution [ES-10/21](#) and open secure and durable humanitarian corridors to Gaza; call on international judicial institutions to prosecute Israel for war crimes and crimes against humanity; denounce the proposal made by a member of the Israeli Government to drop an atomic bomb on the Gaza Strip; and ensure that the Security Council took immediate action to avert that threat.

Statements made in exercise of the right of reply

61. **Ms. Abdelhady** (Observer for the State of Palestine) said that the representative of Israel had falsely claimed that no United Nations body existed to examine the human rights violations in Palestine and Israel. That was, in fact, the mandate of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel, which had been established by the Human Rights Council. However, the Commission had been constantly assailed and blocked by Israel. For its part, the Palestinian leadership had consistently condemned and renounced violence against innocent civilians. The General Assembly had also responded to the current grave crisis by clearly condemning of all acts of violence aimed at Palestinian and Israeli civilians.

62. The representatives of Israel believed that if they mentioned Hamas enough times, the Committee would forget that there was a Palestinian people with a just cause, who had been struggling for over seven decades for the same freedom and dignity to which all peoples were entitled. Their constant incendiary rhetoric and intimidation were intended to divert attention from the fact that Israel was persecuting Palestinians and killing babies, children, youth, women, men and the elderly; that it was committing war crimes, crimes against humanity and state terrorism; and that it had been perpetrating such crimes since 7 October 2023 and in the preceding 75 years. Any support for the false pretext being exploited by Israel to kill and forcibly transfer the Palestinian people from their land was shameful, as was the supply of weapons that were being used to commit genocide.

63. The overwhelming majority of the international community would not overlook those facts, as was demonstrated by the statements made at the United Nations, in national capitals and by the millions of people in the streets calling for an immediate ceasefire, an end to the occupation and a free Palestine. The legal code by which all countries were to be judged, regardless of race, ethnicity, nationality or religion, was international law. The representative of Israel, with his

cleverly crafted, hypothetical statement, hoped that the Committee would forget the threats, incitements, declarations and acts of Israeli officials to wipe out Gaza and Huwwarah, and to drop a nuclear bomb on the Palestinian people, destroying those they described as “human animals” and “children of darkness”. Such statements were made in the open; one could only imagine what the fascist Government and military of Israel were saying behind closed doors, and what was done during the blackouts imposed on Gaza.

64. Israel must urgently be held accountable before the International Criminal Court and the International Court of Justice. It must face consequences, including an arms embargo in line with international law, so long as it continued to reject calls for a ceasefire, to massacre the Palestinian people and to entrench its colonial occupation and apartheid regime. Such actions were not taken in self-defence; they were illegal, immoral and unjustifiable under any pretext.

65. **Mr. Ghelich** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that it appeared that there was no end in sight to the fabrications and disinformation being spread by the Israeli regime in order to conceal its war crimes in Palestine and other occupied territories. Nonetheless, no matter how often the representatives of the Israeli regime spread false information, the world could see the reality on the ground. Israel levelled charges of terrorism at any countries that denounced its oppressive, expansionist and criminal activities in the region, which included decades of aggression, occupation, brutality and extortion against innocent Palestinians, not to mention the threat of a nuclear attack.

66. Israeli regime officials routinely portrayed themselves as innocent in an attempt to maintain a victim mentality. Their playbook included deception and false and fabricated accusations, which had long been a standard practice of Israelis against countries in the region, particularly the Islamic Republic of Iran. The actions and decisions taken by the Palestinian resistance were solely determined by Palestinians themselves and grounded in the right to self-determination. Palestinians were free to make the choices they believed best served their true interests and to exercise their own judgement in determining their course of action.

67. The Israeli regime remained determined to occupy more land and to strengthen its control of occupied areas. In order to force Palestinians to leave their homeland, the regime continued to enact self-made regulations, policies and practices to serve Israeli settlers. In doing so, it violated the human rights of Palestinians by constructing illegal settlements, confiscating their land, and destroying their homes,

natural resources and public amenities such as hospitals and schools. Israel claimed that it committed all such crimes in order to combat Hamas. It was, however, difficult to see how that argument could justify illegal settlement activities and crimes, including genocide and support for Israeli settler violence.

68. The Islamic Republic of Iran was not involved in the response of Palestine. It supported the legitimate reaction of Palestinians, which was intended to realize their right to self-determination.

69. **Mr. Kedar** (Israel) said that States that violated the human rights of their own people were all too comfortable lecturing a particular Member State on alleged human rights violations. A total of 27 States had spent the previous two days promoting a one-sided, extremist and false narrative against Israel; 19 of those States were classified as not free, and another seven as only partly free, by the renowned institute Freedom House. The United Nations would clearly never discuss violations of Israeli human rights by Hamas; it could, however, invest some time in discussing the human rights situation and lack of freedom in 26 of the 27 countries that had attacked Israel during the current debate. Hamas was ISIS, and Gaza and all Palestinians must be freed from Hamas.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.