



# General Assembly

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## Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

### Summary record of the 416th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 11 March 2024, at 10 a.m.

*Chair:* Mr. Niang ..... (Senegal)

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*The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.*

### **Adoption of the agenda (A/AC.183/2024/L.2)**

1. *The agenda was adopted.*

### **Election of officers**

2. **The Chair** invited the Committee to consider nominations for the posts of Vice-Chairs and Rapporteur of the Committee.

3. The following nominations had been received by the secretariat of the Committee: Mr. Peñalver Portal (Cuba), Mr. Nasir (Indonesia), Mr. Muhamad (Malaysia), Mr. Gertze (Namibia) and Mr. Hermida Castillo (Nicaragua) for election as Vice-Chairs; and Mr. Muhamad (Malaysia) for election as Rapporteur.

4. *Mr. Peñalver Portal (Cuba), Mr. Nasir (Indonesia), Mr. Muhamad (Malaysia), Mr. Gertze (Namibia) and Mr. Hermida Castillo (Nicaragua) were elected by acclamation.*

5. **Mr. Peñalver Portal** (Cuba) said that his country's election as Vice-Chair came with a great deal of responsibility, especially given how much importance the Cuban people attached to supporting the Palestinian cause. His delegation would continue to champion a genuine peace process in the region and stood ready to support any initiative aimed at bringing an end to the catastrophe that Israel was unleashing against the Palestinian people. Cuba would continue to support a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the conflict, on the basis of a two-State solution that would allow the Palestinian people to exercise their right to self-determination in an independent sovereign State, with East Jerusalem as its capital, within the 1967 borders, and the right of return for refugees.

### **Update by the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations**

6. **Mr. Mansour** (Observer for the State of Palestine) said that, in the past 157 days, his delegation had been working in various forums, including the Security Council, the General Assembly, the Human Rights Council and the International Court of Justice, to accomplish three objectives to put an end to the aggression against the Palestinian people. The first was to bring about an immediate ceasefire. Two resolutions on the situation had been adopted by the Security Council, but neither contained a call for an immediate ceasefire. Although there was massive support for such a call, one member of the Council with the power of veto was impeding efforts to include that call in a draft resolution. His delegation was grateful to Algeria and

the United Arab Emirates for leading efforts in the Council towards the adoption of a resolution containing a call for an immediate ceasefire, and to the Council members belonging to the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the three African Council members and Guyana for their efforts in that regard.

7. The second objective was to provide humanitarian assistance scaled to the needs of the Palestinian people. With strong evidence of famine, especially in northern Gaza, their needs were huge. Failing to address the continued killing of the Palestinian people, whether by bombing or through starvation, would be a stain on the conscience of the international community. The third was to prevent the crime against humanity of the forced transfer of the Palestinian people in southern Gaza to Egypt and the danger of the invasion of Rafah.

8. During the resumed tenth emergency special session, the General Assembly had adopted two resolutions on the situation, one of which contained an explicit call for a humanitarian ceasefire and echoed the request made by the Secretary-General when he had invoked Article 99 of the Charter of the United Nations. The Assembly had thus fulfilled its responsibilities. During the Assembly meetings convened on 5 March 2024 following the use of the veto in the Security Council, many States had taken the floor to criticize and reject the abuse of the veto that had prevented the Council from adopting a resolution containing a call for a ceasefire. His delegation would continue to urge the Assembly to increase the pressure on the Council.

9. His delegation was grateful to South Africa for bringing the issue of plausible genocide to the International Court of Justice. The Court had ordered six provisional measures, which had not been implemented by Israel. Although Israel had submitted the requested report, South Africa had felt that the report did not meet the Court's request. In the light of the famine situation in Gaza, particularly in the north, South Africa had requested further measures and had warned of additional catastrophes if Israel were to invade Rafah.

10. His delegation was grateful to the many States that had submitted written statements to the International Court of Justice following the request of the General Assembly for the Court to render an advisory opinion on its questions regarding the legal ramifications of the prolonged occupation, the long-term denial of the rights of the Palestinian people, the system of discrimination and apartheid that had been established against the Palestinian people, and the annexation and settlement of Palestinian territory. His delegation was also grateful to the States that had made oral statements during the public hearings from 19 to 26 February 2024.

11. While it might seem that the logical thing to do to achieve a ceasefire and the other two objectives would be to increase the pressure on Israel and those who shielded Israel, the bar needed to be raised higher. Calls should be made for an arms embargo against Israel. Sanctions should be imposed on the entire settler community, not just a few individuals. Settlements were illegal and must be treated as such. Some settler organizations should be labelled as terrorist organizations because they were terrorizing the civilian population in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem.

12. The fact that Israel did not respect its obligations under international law and the Charter of the United Nations and rejected Security Council and General Assembly resolutions and the provisional measures of the International Court of Justice had led some to question whether that country deserved to have a seat in the Assembly. Rather than suspending its membership in the United Nations, the idea of not allowing Israel to participate in the work of the Assembly and its Main Committees was being discussed. Instead of listening to the basis for such proposals, the Israeli leadership was doubling down and had declared that, if such measures were taken, it would kick the United Nations out of the region and take additional measures to make the lives of the Palestinian people even more difficult.

13. At its recent summit, the Non-Aligned Movement had unanimously adopted a political declaration in which it had expressed support for all the issues that he had raised. The Movement supported the admission of the State of Palestine to the United Nations as a Member State and the adoption of a General Assembly resolution containing a call for an international peace conference. His delegation would be working actively with the members of the Committee with the intention of submitting a draft resolution to the Security Council recommending the admission of the State of Palestine as a member. That would be an investment in peace and in the preservation of the two-State solution. Israel, the occupying Power, should not be allowed to determine the destiny of the Palestinian people in terms of their statehood. His delegation hoped that there would be a move from reiterating support for the two-State solution to beginning its implementation. The admission of the State of Palestine as a Member State would strengthen the work of the international conference towards making the two-State solution a reality, meaning the end of the occupation and the establishment of an independent State of Palestine, within the borders of 4 June 1967 and with East Jerusalem as its capital.

14. Victims of the war in Gaza and their families had recently met with the Secretary-General and members of

the Security Council, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the Non-Aligned Movement, the Group of Arab States and the Committee. It had been a moving experience and his delegation hoped to expand the initiative to enable more victims to tell their own stories to the international community.

15. His delegation was grateful to the Secretary-General and the Executive Director of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) for calling for a ceasefire during the commemoration of International Women's Day on 8 March. That was the message not only of almost the entire international community but also of the millions of people who were demonstrating in the streets.

16. The Committee should join those who were fighting to protect the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) from the attempts of the Israeli occupying forces to destroy it, both politically and financially. UNRWA was an indispensable agency that looked after 6 million refugees and was needed more than ever in Gaza.

17. **Ms. Güven** (Türkiye) said that, with the Palestinian people facing the biggest tragedy in recent history, the work of the Committee was more crucial than ever. In addition to its written statement submitted in 2023, Türkiye had made an oral statement before the International Court of Justice. Her delegation would continue to work with the Committee to advocate an immediate ceasefire, unimpeded humanitarian aid, the rejection of the relocation of Palestinians, and compliance with international law, and to promote the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

18. **Mr. Nasir** (Indonesia) said that it was unfortunate that the Committee's objective was continuously undermined, not least by the ongoing brutal attacks in Gaza. It was unthinkable that on the first day of Ramadan the people of Gaza continued to endure pain and hardship and that humanitarian aid continued to be blocked. Actions must be intensified to stand behind UNRWA, the lifeline of millions of Palestinian refugees. Indonesia had tripled and front-loaded its contribution to the Agency for the current year. Outreach must continue to all donors that had suspended funding to the Agency to urge them to reverse their decision.

19. The Committee must continuously ensure that international law, including the provisional measures of the International Court of Justice, was upheld. Indonesia supported the recent request made by South Africa to the Court for additional emergency measures in the light of the current situation and the disregard of the provisional measures ordered by the Court. The Committee must

work together to support the strategies outlined by the Observer for the State of Palestine, especially at a time when the world was increasingly asking what the United Nations was doing to help the Palestinians.

20. **Mr. Hermida Castillo** (Nicaragua) said that, with the holy month of Ramadan beginning, it was more important than ever to support UNRWA. All Governments that had suspended their funding of the Agency should immediately resume funding it. Nicaragua had always supported Palestine and would support its efforts towards national liberation. The war machine maintained by Israel in its ruthless attack and genocide against the Palestinian people must be stopped. Countries that provided weapons, technology and other kinds of military aid to Israel should immediately stop doing so, as such aid was contributing to the genocide in Palestine. Nicaragua had clearly stated that, as a party to the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, it had a moral obligation under international law to take whatever measures were necessary to stop such provision of weapons. Nicaragua had thus requested the International Court of Justice to render an opinion on the matter.

21. **Mr. Muhamad** (Malaysia) said that his country was a long-standing supporter of the Palestinian cause. The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Malaysia had recently delivered an oral statement at the International Court of Justice in connection with the request of the General Assembly for the Court to render an advisory opinion. Having always been a strong supporter of UNRWA, Malaysia had made an additional contribution to the Agency in November 2023 and had recently pledged another one, which it was trying to dispense quickly. As the holy month of Ramadan began and the war in Gaza raged on, the Committee's work had clearly become extremely urgent. The members of the Committee should step up their efforts to increase pressure on Israel and to urge the Security Council to stop the belligerence of Israel and its occupation of Palestine.

*The meeting rose at 10.55 a.m.*