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PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE FORTY-FIFTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Thursday, 3 November 1988, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. CAPUTO (Argentina)
later: Mr. PEJIC (Vice-President) (Yugoslavia)

- The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security [30]
 - (a) Report of the Secretary-General
 - (b) Draft resolution
- Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories: draft resolution [77]

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 30

THE SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY

(a) REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/43/720)

(b) DRAFT RESOLUTION (A/43/L.20)

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): In connection with this item, I am especially pleased to propose that we now consider draft resolution A/43/L.20 on the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security.

We have all viewed with satisfaction and hope the conclusion of the agreements signed at Geneva on 14 April 1988 and the process of withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghan territory, in accordance with the time frame agreed upon on that occasion.

The signing of the agreements on Afghanistan represents one of the most significant international events of recent times. It has a great many positive implications.

First, the agreements are a practical reaffirmation of the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. Specifically, they constitute a balanced package of commitments entered into by the parties, the fulfilment of which opens the way to a comprehensive political settlement through the initiation of a dialogue among all Afghans and the creation of a broadly representative Government.

Furthermore, the agreements have implications world-wide in that they confirm and inspire an encouraging trend towards seeking negotiated solutions to international disputes. In that connection, the agreements of 14 April 1988

(The President)

initiated a positive process which now embraces other important regional disputes and which has significantly altered and improved an overall situation in which discord and conflict had traditionally predominated.

In expressing our satisfaction with the agreements, we wish to congratulate the leaders of the signatory parties, who had the vision and the courage to put the general interest of peace before any other consideration. At the same time, we wish to emphasize the role played by the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, and his Personal Representative, currently Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ecuador, Mr. Diego Cordovez. The international community should be profoundly grateful to both of them for their continued efforts to achieve a political solution to the Afghan problem. The Geneva agreements are, to a considerable extent, the result of the dedication, perseverance and intelligence of the representatives of our Organization.

It is important that the Geneva agreements should not fail. They are an important milestone but not an end in themselves. Much remains to be done in order to achieve a comprehensive solution of the Afghan question, including the problem of the refugees and the difficulties in setting in motion the necessary inter-Afghan dialogue aimed at establishing a broad-based Government acceptable to the Afghan people. We trust that the steps currently being taken by the Secretary-General and his Personal Representative will enable progress to be made also on this delicate aspect of the problem.

One fundamental element in this whole situation is, of course, scrupulous compliance with the spirit and the letter of the Geneva agreements by all parties concerned. In this connection, we should emphasize the continuing process of complete withdrawal of foreign troops and the declared readiness of the signatories to ensure respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity, political

(The President)

independence and non-aligned character of Afghanistan and the right of the people of that country to achieve full self-determination.

Lastly, the international community has a responsibility to lend its full political support to these agreements and to continue to help alleviate the serious humanitarian problems that remain, particularly the refugee problem. In this connection, I am especially gratified at the appointment of a Special Co-ordinator, in the person of Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan, to channel economic and humanitarian assistance to the Afghan people.

(The President)

All these aspects are duly reflected in the draft resolution before you. The draft resolution I am submitting is, of course, the result of a consensus between the parties. I trust that the Assembly, too, will adopt it by consensus, for that would help reinforce the constructive atmosphere surrounding the issue and ultimately contribute to the settlement of the Afghan problem.

Before moving on to the vote of the draft resolution, I wish to point out that, as part of the understanding between those directly concerned, it was agreed that there would be no debate on the item in the General Assembly. I suggest that we abide by this understanding, which is designed to permit the broadest possible support for the draft resolution. If I hear no objections, I will take it that the General Assembly agrees not to discuss the item under consideration.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): This afternoon we have before us for consideration the text of the draft resolution to which I have referred. The relevant report of the Secretary-General has been issued as document A/43/720-S/20230. The draft resolution on the subject has been issued as document A/43/L.20. The Secretary-General wishes to inform the General Assembly that the draft resolution has no direct programme budget implications. His proposals concerning the arrangements provided for under the Agreements on the Settlement of the Situation Relating to Afghanistan, along with the revised estimates, have been submitted to the Fifth Committee, which will report to the General Assembly in the course of this session. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to adopt this draft resolution?

Draft resolution A/43/L.20 was adopted (resolution 43/20).

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): The Assembly has thus concluded its consideration of agenda item 30.

AGENDA ITEM 77

REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE ISRAELI PRACTICES AFFECTING THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF THE POPULATION OF THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES: DRAFT RESOLUTION (A/43/L.21)

The PRESIDENT (intepretation from Spanish): Members will recall that the General Assembly decided on 26 October 1988 that one special plenary meeting would be held, under agenda item 77, on the uprising in the occupied territories on the understanding that the Special Political Committee would remain seized of the item for its customary consideration.

In this connection the Assembly has before it a draft resolution, contained in document A/43/L.21, which was circulated yesterday afternoon.

I now call on Mr. Daya Perera of Sri Lanka, Chairman of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories.

Mr. PERERA (Sri Lanka), Chairman of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories: Twenty-one years have elapsed since the occupation of the Arab territories by Israel. Since the occupation the policy of the Government of Israel has been to administer the occupied territories as if they constituted a part of the State of Israel. That policy has led to the establishment of settlements, expropriation of property, the transfer of Israeli citizens to the occupied territories, and direct and indirect steps to induce the Palestinian population to leave their homeland.

In its report to the General Assembly last year the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories, of which I am the Chairman, warned that:

"The persistent policy of annexation of the occupied territories, which meets with fierce resistance on the part of the civilian population, and the cycle

(Mr. Perera, Chairman, Special
Committee to Investigate
Israeli Practices Affecting
the Human Rights of the Population
of the Occupied Territories)

of tension and repression that the implementation of such a policy involves, have led to an explosive situation that seems bound to provoke yet more dramatic events in the future." (A/42/650, para. 216)

This warning by the Special Committee was not heeded by Israel and an incident in the Gaza Strip in December 1987 quickly spread to the entire occupied territories, causing an uprising against the occupation.

During the period of occupation the international community has seen a deterioration of the situation in the occupied territories, a situation which has been marked by a noticeable increase in the frequency and intensity of daily incidents. The civilian population in the territories, particularly the young generation born and brought up under occupation rule, has been subjected to various measures of harassment, humiliation, deportation and restriction of their basic rights and freedoms by the occupying power. Acts of aggression committed by Israeli settlers against Palestinians have contributed to a further deterioration in the climate of tension and terror prevailing in the occupied territories. The continued suffering and frustration of the civilian population in the occupied territories has caused them to react with determination to oppose the rule of the occupying Power and regain their inalienable rights. Brutal attempts to suppress the uprising have only strengthened their resistance to the occupation.

The United Nations has emphasized the principle of the illegality of the acquisition of territory by war. This requires Israel to withdraw from the territories occupied as a result of the war. The continued Israeli occupation constitutes a violation of the inalienable rights of the Arab population. Further, the territories have been administered by Israel with total disregard for the

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provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention, which stipulates that military occupation is to be considered as a temporary de facto situation, giving no right whatsoever to the occupying power over the territorial integrity of the occupied territories.

As in previous years, the Israeli Government did not permit the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices to visit the occupied territories and observe the position in situ. However, it did visit Amman, Damascus and Cairo and heard the testimony of witnesses who were living in the occupied territories during the period of the intifadah. These witnesses testified to the harsh conditions that existed and to the atrocities committed by the Israelis. A new phenomenon that had emerged was the use of tear gas, which, according to the testimonies recorded, caused a large number of women to miscarry. Evidence was also recorded with regard to collective punishments and to restrictions on fundamental freedoms. Detailed accounts of this evidence, as well as material gleaned from the Israeli press and the Arab press, have also been included in the report, which will be introduced in the Special Political Committee on 17 November.

(Mr. Perera, Chairman, Special
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I take this opportunity to stress that the responsibility of the international community is more manifest than ever before and that urgent measures must be taken to prevent a further deterioration of the situation.

The protection of the basic rights of the civilians in the occupied territories can only be ensured through the negotiation of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict acceptable to all concerned. The Special Committee is of the view that until a comprehensive settlement is achieved some interim measures could contribute to the full restoration of the rights of the civilians in the occupied territories. Such interim measures should include full application of provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention by Israel, co-operation of the Israeli authorities with the International Committee of the Red Cross, support by Member States of the activities of the International Committee of the Red Cross and the activities of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East in the occupied territories.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): The next speaker is the Observer of the Palestine Liberation Organization. I call on him in accordance with resolution 3237 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974.

Mr. AL-KIDWA (Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)) (interpretation from Arabic): Mr. President, I should like to begin by congratulating you on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its forty-third session. I should also like to extend our thanks to you and to all Member States for the positive manner in which this plenary meeting has been convened to discuss the intifadah of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, the glorious uprising of the Palestinian people now approaching its twelfth month. It

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has offered its martyrs, its wounded, and many additional sacrifices as a price for freedom and national independence.

We meet today under extraordinary circumstances, when in the occupied Palestinian territory the passage of time means the loss of more of our men, women and children to the murderous Israeli war machine. Your awareness of the enormous gravity of the situation there, and of the need to shoulder your responsibilities in reaching solutions to ensure an end to the tragedy our people face and as a step toward the achievement of their inalienable rights, is undoubtedly what prompted the convening of this meeting, which should produce the positive results required. Our people look to you for those results.

Twenty-one years ago our people in the Palestinian West Bank and the Gaza Strip experienced a new tragedy, in addition to the tragedy they were living through, along with other sectors of the Palestinian people in refugee camps, and the Diaspora following the catastrophe of 1948. As though their uprooting from the land, displacement, denial of fundamental freedoms, denial of national rights and deprivation of a political entity were not enough, the occupation of the rest of Palestine was added to that list. The abhorrent Israeli occupation continues to this very day, causing one of the most significant tragedies of our age, creating a major hotbed of tension and conflict, and posing a serious and permanent threat to peace and security in the Middle East region, and even to international peace and security in general.

There have been 21 years of Israeli occupation and aggression against our people and 21 years of Palestinian resistance against that occupation, resistance which has now culminated in the uprising.

What is the cause of the new uprising of the Palestinian people? Why does a whole people revolt? Why do stone-throwing children confront the Israeli military

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machine? Why are there so many sacrifices? How can nails and teeth fight rifles and bullets?

The answer can be given in one word: occupation. Occupation and its continuation cause resistance and confrontation. This is nothing new to most peoples of the world. It is also guaranteed in international covenants and conventions. But here we may add to this major cause many Israeli atrocities. To occupation we may add the Israeli attitude based on the denial of the very existence of the Palestinian people, or at least refusal to recognize its legitimate national rights. This attitude is accompanied by claims of sovereignty over the occupied Arab territories which found clear expression in the illegal annexation of Arab Jerusalem as well as the Syrian Golan Heights. We may add to the occupation the confiscation of land under various pretexts; the establishment of illegal settlements to house colonial settlers, and the arming of those settlers which created a direct threat to our people. We may add to the occupation the economic pillage and exploitation of the population, which began with stealing and confiscating water resources, thus creating intolerable conditions, and which included exploitatio of Palestinian labour, the levying of unjust taxes, the exploitation of the local market, and the blocking of any serious economic development by hampering or preventing projects, even by United Nations organizations, if they involved any form of production or development. We may add to the occupation the striking at and impeding of health, education and cultural institutions, as well as the intensification of oppression against our people, starting with the application of the emergency regulations which involve the arrest and deportation of Palestinians only, and including the prevention of any form of democratic life, even municipal elections, a limitation on the freedom of movement and travel, press censorship and repeated and systematic attacks on holy religious shrines.

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We can add to occupation the failure to implement United Nations resolutions on persons displaced in 1967 and on the return of the Palestinian refugees of 1948 to their homes and properties or compensation for those refugees. In brief, we can add to occupation the miserable conditions in which our people live, nationally, politically, economically and socially, and the denial of all fundamental freedoms and human rights.

This is the occupation and these are its characteristics. It is, of course, a matter that cannot be taken in isolation from Israel's relentless action against other sectors of our people, in particular in Lebanon, where it takes the form of repeated invasions, artillery and naval shelling and regular air raids, resulting in the loss of thousands of lives among Palestinians and Lebanese alike. To all this must be added political sabotage and massive material losses.

Our people within and outside the occupied territories are awaiting at least a minimum of justice, and for the international community to demonstrate its will, in particular, by ensuring implementation of United Nations resolutions. In this connection we remind the Assembly that between 1967 and 1986 the Security Council adopted 17 resolutions relating to the situation in the occupied territories alone. Israel has not complied with a single one of those 17 resolutions, notwithstanding the clear provisions of the Charter in this regard. Moreover, Israel has openly rejected and expressed hostility to scores of General Assembly resolutions. In the field of international law, suffice it to refer to Israel's rejection of the applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention, of 12 August 1949, to the occupied Palestinian territory and other occupied Arab territories, and its refusal to abide by the provisions of that Convention.

Faced with this situation, in the absence of any hopeful regional or international initiatives, and in view of the Israeli occupation authorities' persistence in their brutal, oppressive practices and their rejection of all

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attempts to bring about peace, our people had no recourse but to intensify its rejection of occupation and step up resistance to it, inspired by the whole history of Palestinian resistance, until the outbreak of the glorious uprising of 9 December 1987. This uprising represents our people's total rejection of occupation, its adherence to its independent national character and its faith, and its determination to regain its inalienable rights, including the right to establish its own independent State, with the Palestine Liberation Organization as its sole, legitimate representative.

Against this we see the brutal Israeli position which ignores or denies the background of the situation, rejects the national dimension of the intifadah - the uprising - and its goals, and refuses to recognize the historical inevitability of the attainment of these goals, resorting to ever increasing force as an official policy and persecuting our people without regard to law or morality. At this point I shall review some of these Israeli practices and their destructive consequences.

First, Israel has deployed thousands of its soldiers, fully equipped with, among other things, armoured vehicles, who have opened heavy fire on defenceless Palestinian civilians, using a variety of ammunition, from live bullets to plastic bullets, resulting in hundreds of martyrs and thousands of wounded. Moreover, they have used toxic gases on a wide scale and thrown toxic gas bombs into enclosed areas, resulting in scores of deaths, hundreds of people suffocated, and approximately 500 miscarriages. In addition, of course, there are the invisible effects, as well as the severe beatings of persons under their control to break bones and inflict permanent disability. This is the official policy of the Israeli army, according to statements by the Defence Minister. As a result there have been hundreds of cases of fractured skulls and concussion, leading to permanent or temporary disability. The fascist practices have been stepped up to the point where people have been buried alive or burned by Israeli troops. There are

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established and acknowledged cases. It is important here to mention the effective participation of settler vigilantes in all these killings and acts of terror.

The outcome of all this, by 30 October 1988, was the following: 411 martyrs, including 60 women, 50 children and 25 babes-in-arms, 273 of whom were shot by the Israeli army, 37 shot by settler vigilantes, 36 killed by beatings and in suspicious circumstances and 65 killed by inhaling toxic gas, while another 45,000 were wounded. These figures have been confirmed by medical reports. Of those injured, 20 per cent were wounded by live, rubber or plastic bullets, 45 per cent were injured by beatings with various objects, including rifle butts, 35 per cent suffered from inhaling toxic gas and 5 per cent were injured by other means, including torture and burying alive.

Secondly, the Israelis have closed off entire areas and laid siege to them, preventing the entry of food supplies and provisions and imposing curfews on towns, villages and refugee camps for prolonged periods of up to several weeks. These measures have resulted in alarming food, health and social conditions. Houses have been demolished on such pretexts as that a family member has thrown a stone, or the absence of a building permit: 115 houses were demolished on the pretext of security and another 143 because of the absence of permits, among them, for example, 26 houses in the village of Kisan, near Bethlehen, on 26 October. Homes have been closed or raided and their contents destroyed, resulting in the displacement of a large number of Palestinian families - about 2,500 people in all.

Thirdly, there have been mass arrests affecting 30,000 Palestinians and the administrative detention, without trial and without charges being laid against them, of 5,400 Palestinians. They have been held in military detention camps - the most infamous being Ansar 3 in the Negev, with 2,500 detainees, including writers, poets, physicians, lawyers, and so forth - in subhuman conditions in the desert.

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These detainees are, moreover, subjected to acts of terror, such as being fired upon - which has led to the death of two martyrs. In this regard we would refer to the bulletin of the International Committee of the Red Cross of September last. Israel has repeatedly resorted to what the whole world has, unanimously and categorically, rejected, that is, the deportation of Palestinian inhabitants into exile. Since the start of the intifadah, 32 Palestinians have been deported to south Lebanon in four groups, notwithstanding the protests of the Lebanese authorities; and 27 deportation orders have been issued against other Palestinians. We would recall that 2,000 Palestinians have been deported since 1967.

Fourthly, there is the permanent closing of schools, institutions and universities. The activities of a large number of humanitarian, social and cultural societies have been shut down. Newspapers and numerous trade unions have been shut down. An insane campaign was launched against popular committees after they were banned. Worse, there was obstruction of emergency aid and treatment by raids on hospitals, the rejection of applications for permits to import ambulances, the impeding of the movement of the few ambulances available, and the issuing of orders prohibiting the treatment of the wounded in government hospitals.

Fifthly, there was an escalation of economic repression. This is represented by the forcible levying of taxes, the ban on the bringing of money into the country, the illegal confiscation of significant amounts of money owned by Palestinians, the uprooting of thousands of olive trees and other crops, and the prohibition of the harvesting and exporting of main crops such as olives and grapes.

Sixthly, there has been an attempt to isolate the West Bank and the Gaza Strip from the outside world even by cutting telephone communications. Those areas are considered to be off limits - with no entry, no exit. The mass media are

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restricted by numerous methods, such as the ban on entry into and movement in certain areas, especially for television crews.

I have given only an overview of what Israel is doing against our people. We have specific details, which we shall present to the Special Political Committee. However, all those actions did not - and will not, God willing - stop the intifadah. Our people have been able to continue to resist, enjoying the highest degree of awareness and precise organization; setting a wonderful example of complete national unity; creating new methods of life and resistance against oppression and persecution, such as the strengthening of popular committees in all places and fields; promoting the domestic economy and agricultural co-operation; promoting popular education in the face of the policy of obscurantism; organizing trade; promoting a boycott of enemy commodities; and even developing and changing the pattern of social relations.

All that is taking place within the framework of interaction among the various sectors of our population, including intellectuals and leaders, particularly the Palestine Liberation Organization-Unified National Leadership, with the acronym QAWIM, meaning "resist", which is a holy word in the vocabulary of our people.

The intifadah has its causes, comprehensive national goals and demands, all of which could bring to an end the current tragic situation and the blood-letting. We consider it the obligation of the international community to respond to those demands and to compel Israel, the occupying Power, to fulfil them.

I would remind you here of Israel's total disregard for the resolutions adopted by the Security Council since the beginning of the intifadah, namely, resolutions 605 (1987), 607 (1988) and 608 (1988).

Allow me here to quote from Statement No. 27, issued by the Palestine Liberation Organization-Unified National Leadership in the occupied Palestinian territory on 19 October and directed, in essence, to the United Nations:

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"The Unified National Leadership calls upon the United Nations on the anniversary of its establishment to shoulder its full responsibility in implementing its resolutions which guarantee the right of our people to return, self-determination and the establishment of an independent State under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization. As the Unified National Leadership congratulates the Secretary-General of the United Nations on this occasion and all the people of the world who support our rights, it reaffirms the need to ensure the following legitimate demands: first, the withdrawal of the occupation forces from the Palestinian population areas; secondly, the abrogation of all mandatory and occupation covenants and emergency regulations in effect; thirdly, the cessation of the policy of settlement and the annexation and dismantling of existing settlements; fourthly, the release of the intifidahn detainees and the closure of the military detention camps; and fifthly, the securing of international protection for the defenceless masses of our people for a period not exceeding several months, in preparation for the creation by our people of an independent State, with Jerusalem as its capital."

We consider that the realization of these demands may constitute a major step towards the achievement of a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East. That is the peace the entire world longs for, the peace the Palestinian people aspires to more than anything else.

The Palestine Liberation Organization has declared its readiness to participate seriously in the peace process in the Middle East on the basis of international legality, which constitutes an integral whole from which no party can choose or reject elements as it pleases. We declare here, once again, that we accept the establishment of peace on the basis of all the United Nations

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resolutions relevant to the question of Palestine and the situation in the Middle East, including Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), but not on the basis of those two resolutions alone.

Frankly speaking, we cannot accept, or even understand, the attitude of certain parties which insist on considering the resolutions I have mentioned as the sole terms of reference for the achievement of peace. We cannot understand that attitude, not only in the light of the principled position of viewing international legality as an integral whole but also in the light of the fact that those parties have already voted in favour of other United Nations resolutions, such as General Assembly resolutions 181 (II) of 29 November 1947 and 194 (III) of 11 December 1948 as well as several Security Council resolutions, including resolutions 267 (1969), 298 (1971), 465 (1980) and 607 (1988).

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Therefore, insistence by those parties on that position is, in our opinion, only an arbitrary insistence on refusing to determine the political basis, even in broad outlines, for a peaceful settlement, and on rejecting the rights of the Palestinian people, particularly the right to self-determination and to establish its own State.

None the less, we believe that the conditions of international détente and the improved relations between the two super-Powers may constitute a catalyst for convening the international peace conference on the Middle East under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation of the permanent members of the Security Council and the parties concerned, including, of course, the Palestine Liberation Organization and Israel. We view this conference as the only possible machinery for the achievement of peace in the region. In this connection, while we express our appreciation for the positive attitude of the Soviet Union toward the cause of the Palestinian people, we hope that the United States administration will be able, especially after the elections, to take a just position consistent with its role as a super-Power, one that would serve the cause of peace. Our people has been unable so far to separate what happened to it and what is now happening in the occupied land from the absolute United States support of Israel and its policies.

In a few days, the Palestine National Council, the highest legislative authority of the Palestinian people, will hold its nineteenth extraordinary session in brotherly Algeria on 12 November 1988. That session will be devoted to extending support to the intifadah in the occupied Palestinian territory. It will also review the significant political changes that have occurred in the preceding period, including the announcement by the brotherly Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan that it was severing its legal and administrative links with the West Bank, as well as the numerous political moves made in an attempt to activate the process of

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achieving peace in the region. We can expect the Palestine National Council to adopt at its next session many important resolutions to ensure and guarantee the future of the Palestinian territory and the sovereignty of the Palestinian people over it, in the light of the decision by the Palestinian leadership that the Palestine Liberation Organization shoulder all its responsibilities towards the occupied Palestinian territory and towards our people there.

The Palestine National Council will also discuss the promotion and development of Palestinian Arab relations, particularly Palestinian-Jordanian relations, which are of a special nature, as well as all actions for the achievement of peace in general.

We hope to see - we even depend on - achieving the widest possible international support for the next steps we take based on our just position. We hope that all of us will, as a result, be able to move the peace process forward.

We should like to express our thanks to all the States that have supported the intifadah of our people and its just goals. We also thank those States that stood opposed to the atrocious Israeli practices. We extend our thanks also to the United Nations and its Secretary-General as well as all its subsidiary bodies and specialized agencies. We also thank governmental and non-governmental organizations.

We should like to thank the members of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories.

Our people will continue its struggle. The intifadah of our people in the occupied Palestinian territory will continue as well as the struggle by other sectors of our people who are struggling to attain its inalienable rights, including the right to establish its own State and to achieve a just peace in the

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region. The question is: How can the international community, how can the United Nations, achieve that goal with the least amount of suffering and the smallest number of victims on all sides?

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): I call on the representative of Jordan to introduce the draft resolution.

Mr. SALAH (Jordan) (interpretation from Arabic): Mr. President, I should like first to express my gratitude for the positive response to the request of the Arab Group to have the subject of the popular uprising in the occupied Palestinian territories discussed in the General Assembly. This response constitutes constructive co-operation on the part of the presidency of the General Assembly and reflects recognition by the international community of the importance of the subject.

I should also like to point out that I am speaking on behalf of the group of States members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, since my country had the honour to preside over the Seventeenth Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, called the "Session of Islamic Solidarity with the Uprising of the Palestinian People", and also on behalf of the Group of Arab States, of which my country is Chairman for this month.

The General Assembly has over the years regularly discussed Israeli practices in the occupied Palestinian and Arab territories. However, discussion of this item during the present session will inevitably be of a special nature, as the occupied Palestinian territories have, over the past 11 months, witnessed - and are continuing to witness - a growing popular revolution conducted by defenceless Palestinians in defiance of continued attempts of the Israeli military machine to suppress them and to stifle their revolution. The Palestinian Arab people hopes, as it suffers under the oppression of Israeli colonialism, that the discussion in

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the General Assembly of its plight will mark a turning-point in the way the subject is addressed, in order that the appropriate steps are taken whereby the United Nations can exercise its responsibilities, as provided for in the Charter, with respect to the peaceful settlement of disputes and the maintenance of international peace and security. The Palestinian people is looking forward to the deliberations taking place at this session - and at this meeting in particular - hoping that they will provide more than simply another occasion for offering expressions of sympathy. For the uprising, or intifadah, represents a strategic development in the question of Palestine which can be dealt with only by putting an end to the Israeli occupation.

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The intifadah-revolution which the occupied Palestinian territories are experiencing cannot be treated as one incident in isolation from the totality of the Palestinian people's struggle over the past decades for the restoration of its rights. It is an advanced form of that escalating struggle, a fresh expression of the Palestinian national identity and a heroic act on the part of a people whose aim is to put an end to the long-drawn-out suffering it has endured since it began to defend its national cause. The Palestinian people has succeeded, by means of this uprising, in bringing the whole world - and particularly Israeli society and Israel's supporters - face to face with it and its cause, in a manner which admits of no equivocation or deception.

This more-developed stage of the Palestinian people's sufferings and struggle, which have been intensifying since the inception of the Israeli occupation over 20 years ago, has in its duration, scope and objectives exceeded the previous successive limited situations in the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories. This uprising-revolution has shown the whole world that the Palestinian Arab people, while subjected to the most abhorrent forms of colonialism, is determined - whatever the sacrifice - to attain its national independence and exercise its inalienable historical rights, foremost among which is the right to self-determination and the establishment of its own State on its national soil.

Israel has responded to the uprising in the same way that it has responded to all stages in the Palestinian people's cause - namely, by using force and violence and attempting to enforce the status quo as a means of achieving its political goals. The Israeli leadership has gone to further extremes, indulging in repression, on the one hand, and endeavouring to justify itself and evade responsibility, on the other. In Israel's eyes, everyone in the world is

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responsible for the uprising except Israel itself. Since the beginning of the uprising, Israel has persistently attempted to establish "external" pretexts and motives for this development. At times it has accused foreign parties of provocation and at other times it alleged that the events were taking place because of the presence of journalists and television cameramen; and on many occasions it has declared that the very discussion by the United Nations of its oppression and violence serves only to exacerbate the situation.

Israel has placed itself at odds with everyone else on a major moral issue, whose existence and motives it subornly refuses to recognize. For Israel's ruling circles, its colonial occupation of the Palestinian territories and the colonization of their population do not constitute a sufficient reason for the Palestinians' revolution. In the opinion of some of those circles, it is up to the Palestinians to accept that occupation or face extermination - as if they were locusts.

The conditions in which the Palestinians live in the occupied territories, and the political, economic and psychological pressures to which they are subjected, defy description. The world is well aware that Israel bears full responsibility for the deterioration of those conditions; indeed, they have deteriorated to such an extent that the Palestinians have despaired of attaining an honourable solution unless they take the situation into their own hands. It is therefore only natural that the Palestinians should revolt in order to express their categorical rejection of the Israeli occupation and to make it possible to wrest back their rights.

Israel has over the past 20 years - and particularly during the past 11 months - tried all the policies and means which it has deemed expedient in an attempt to dampen the fire of the Palestinian people's revolution. To cite but some of these, it has pursued the "iron-fist" policy, with the consequent beatings,

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breaking of bones and burials alive; starvation; closure of the occupied territories and isolation of parts thereof; demolition of homes and villages; and political assassinations.

Apart from some timid references by certain Israeli officials, the official position of the Israeli Government is still the rejection of any political dealing with the uprising, because Israel believes that the intifadah is a security issue which can be addressed through measures of repression. It appears to be unconvinced - despite the hundreds of Palestinians killed and the thousands injured or detained - that its policy has failed. Indeed, it is - with blatant obstinacy - stepping up those disgraceful practices. It is no longer deterred by the young age of the children it kills or by the advanced age of the old people it tortures, or by the condition of the pregnant women on whom it rains blows and kicks. Nor is it deterred by the sanctity of churches, mosques, hospitals or educational institutions. The Israeli Government provides the whole world every day with further practical manifestations of the collapse of all those spurious concepts and allegations with respect to its role as a fountainhead of higher values and an oasis of democracy which it has attempted to inculcate in international public opinion throughout the years of its existence as a State. This uprising, together with Israel's repressive practices, represents an important turning-point in the world's view of Israel, in the relationship between the two, and in the world's understanding of the Arab-Israeli conflict and its background - in isolation from the campaigns of slander conducted over many years.

The policy of Israeli settler colonialism - at a time when colonialism is being eliminated - is a phenomenon which is no less out of place than the policy of apartheid practised by the Government of South Africa in an era that is obviously characterized by the defence of human rights. Both phenomena go against the tide

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of history, and both are therefore doomed to failure. I do not think there is any need to provide examples of or proof for the comparison. The international community is fully aware of the nature of the racist and inhuman practices pursued by both Israel and South Africa. The fact that the Israeli Government has followed in South Africa's footsteps by imposing censorship on press coverage has not stopped the escalation of the uprising and has not prevented world public opinion from continuing to be informed of the suffering of the Palestinian people.

In our view, the international community's commemoration of the fortieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights should provide an occasion to affirm the comprehensive nature of that Declaration and to forgo selectivity and dual standards in the application of its provisions. Man's right to individual freedom and dignity and the peoples' right to self-determination are principles that must be applied the world over, and not in certain parts alone. They represent an indivisible whole, and it is incumbent that we should make every human effort towards their full implementation.

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The events of recent months have not been sufficient to persuade the Israeli leadership to change its position. The leadership's problem is that it has no faith in the political solution based on the exchange of land for peace that is being urgently called for by the world as a whole. Those in its influential circles do not consider withdrawal from the occupied Palestinian territories to be an option worthy of consideration. Despite the momentum of the uprising and the increase in international condemnation and denunciation of Israel's methods of dealing with it, Israel's settlement policies are being maintained. There can be no better evidence of that than the Israeli Prime Minister's inauguration of new settlements on the West Bank in the course of last week. This takes place at a time when the Israeli Government is still allowing residents of such settlements to arm themselves and, disgracefully, continuing to condone their terrorist practices against the legitimate owners of the land. This demonstrates the dual standards of the Israeli judicial system, which does not regard attacks on Palestinians as constituting a crime to be punished by law, while all possible means of repression are used against any Palestinian who acts in self-defence.

The Palestinian people living under occupation do not consider our discussions simply to be another opportunity for the adoption of a resolution, to be added to previous resolutions, which have remained unimplemented. The Security Council has adopted a number of resolutions since the beginning of the intifadah. Israel has not only failed to comply with those resolutions but has even refused to admit the Security Council's competence to discuss the subject. It has been alone in rejecting the international consensus that the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 is applicable to the occupied Palestinian territories. This rejection is consistent with Israel's long tradition of ignoring the international will and continually refusing to recognize the legitimacy of the Charter and of United Nations

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resolutions. Accordingly, this international Organization, and the Security Council in particular, is urged to shoulder the responsibilities entrusted to it under the Charter. It is essential, if the United Nations is to maintain its prestige, that the Organization concentrate on ensuring the implementation of the many Security Council resolutions which affirm that the Fourth Geneva Convention does apply to the occupied territories and that Israel must take immediate steps to give effect to it.

With regard to the essence and basis of the conflict, which can be ended only by termination of the Israeli occupation and the solution of the question of Palestine, the Arab States, through their leaders, have expressed at the last two summit conferences their commitment to the achievement of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace on the basis of relevant United Nations resolutions. The Arab summit conferences emphasized the need to convene the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations and with the participation of the five permanent members of the Security Council and all the parties to the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, on an equal footing with the other parties concerned. The summit conferences considered the Conference to be the only appropriate means of attaining a peaceful, just and comprehensive settlement of the conflict that would ensure restoration of the occupied Palestinian and Arab territories, solve all aspects of the Palestinian question and guarantee the Palestinian people's inalienable national rights. This positive attitude on the part of the Arab States met with the support and encouragement of the overwhelming majority of the nations of the world.

Jordan, together with the other Arab and Islamic States and all peace-loving forces in the world, hopes that the United Nations will at a very early date be able to arrange for the Conference to be convened, because the continuance of the

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current situation in the Middle East region represents a grave and dangerous threat to international peace and security. Furthermore, failure to put an end to the tragedy of the Palestinian people will confront the international community with a moral dilemma which, if it continues, will endanger the effectiveness and credibility of the United Nations and its Charter.

I should like now to introduce draft resolution A/43/L.21, entitled "The uprising (intifadah) of the Palestinian people", on behalf of the following States, which are its sponsors: Afghanistan, Algeria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Comoros, Cuba, Cyprus, Czechoslovakia, Democratic Yemen, Djibouti, Egypt, the German Democratic Republic, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mongolia, Morocco, Nicaragua, Niger, Oman, Pakistan, Poland, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, Turkey, the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United Arab Emirates, Viet Nam, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The articles of the draft resolution are clear and balanced and are drafted in such a way as to reflect the desire to build a consensus on this basis in order to express the General Assembly's feelings of sympathy for the Palestinian people in their suffering in the occupied territories and because of their maltreatment and persecution at the hands of the occupying Power, Israel.

The preamble consists of six paragraphs, which include an expression of deep concern at the alarming situation in the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied by Israel and a reaffirmation that the Fourth Geneva Convention is applicable to the territories, including Jerusalem. They also include references

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to relevant General Assembly resolutions, to Security Council resolutions 605 (1987), 607 (1988) and 608 (1988) and to the need to resolve the underlying problem, including the Palestinian problem in all its aspects.

The draft resolution has eight operative paragraphs, the first of which condemns Israel's practices violating the human rights of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories, including Jerusalem.

(Mr. Salah, Jordan)

In operative paragraph 2 the General Assembly strongly deplores the continuing disregard by Israel, the occupying Power, of the relevant decisions of the Security Council; while in operative paragraph 3 it reaffirms that the occupation by Israel of the Palestinian territories since 1967, including Jerusalem, in no way changes the legal status of those territories.

In operative paragraph 4, the General Assembly demands that Israel, the occupying Power, abide immediately and scrupulously by the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, and desist forthwith from its policies and practices that are in violation of the provisions of the Convention. In operative paragraph 5, it calls upon all the High Contracting Parties to the Convention to take appropriate measures to ensure respect by Israel, the occupying Power, for the Convention in all circumstances in conformity with their obligation under article 1 thereof.

In operative paragraph 6, the General Assembly invites Member States, the organizations of the United Nations system, governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, and the mass communications media to continue and enhance their support for the Palestinian people.

Operative paragraph 7 is a call to the Security Council to consider the current situation in the occupied Palestinian territories, taking into account the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General, that is, document S/19443.

Finally, in operative paragraph 8, the General Assembly also requests the Secretary-General to examine the present situation in the occupied Palestinian territories by all means available to him and to submit periodic reports thereon, the first such report no later than 17 November 1988.

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On behalf of all the States sponsoring this draft resolution, I invite members of the General Assembly to vote in its favour, in the hope that the resolution, once adopted, will help reduce the suffering of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories, as one step on the path towards a just, lasting and comprehensive solution of the question of Palestine.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): I now call on the representative of Greece, who will speak on behalf of the States members of the European Community.

Mr. ZEPOS (Greece): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Twelve member States of the European Community.

When the Special Political Committee considers agenda item 77, the Twelve will have the opportunity to express their views in greater detail. At this stage, we should like to make some remarks of a more general nature.

As a matter of principle, the Twelve attach the greatest importance to all matters affecting the rights of the population of the Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967.

In the last 12 months we have followed with deep concern the situation in the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip, which has seriously deteriorated as a result of the continuing Israeli occupation. Civilian resistance to the occupation has grown, and has undoubtedly been further intensified by the excessive level of force employed by the occupation forces. It reflects the wholly understandable frustration and resentment at the length of the occupation and at the still uncertain prospects for an early solution.

The civilian population of the territories, including in many cases women and children, has suffered tragically. The examples are too numerous to be given

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a settlement is set out in the Venice Declaration and subsequent statements, and is well known. All parties should clearly and unambiguously accept two principles: the right to existence and security of all States in the area, including Israel, and the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, with all that this implies. The support of the Twelve for an international peace conference under the auspices of the United Nations is also well known. Our long-standing contacts with all parties to the conflict is but one expression of our ardent desire to see peace prevail in the Middle East. At this crucial juncture we appeal to all the parties concerned to redouble their efforts to reach a political solution, taking into account the legitimate interests and rights of all.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): I now call on the representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States.

Mr. BELONOGOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): I am speaking as Chairman of the Group of Eastern European States.

The fact that the question of the occupied territories has been singled out for urgent discussion in a plenary meeting of the General Assembly testifies to the mounting disquiet of the international community over the situation developing in the West Bank and Gaza.

(Mr. Belonogov, USSR)

The Secretary-General, in his report of 30 September 1988, stated:

"The violence and suffering in the occupied territories ... continue unabated ... The continuing occupation of those territories is not acceptable to their inhabitants and will not become so." (A/43/691, p. 8)

Every day a steady succession of reports come in from the news agencies about clashes between the Israeli forces and the inhabitants of the West Bank and Gaza, about the death and mutilation of Palestinians, including women, children and adolescents. The causes of the persistent tension in these areas are evident to the overwhelming majority of States Members of the United Nations. Those causes are the continuing occupation of the territories captured by Israel in 1967 and the fact that the rights of the Palestinian people, primarily their right to self-determination and to the establishment of their own State, have been trampled underfoot.

The measures of violence used by the occupying Power constitute a flagrant violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention on the Protection of Civilian Populations in Time of War of 12 August 1949. In fact, "protection" is hardly an appropriate word to use at a time when the hospitals in the occupied territories are overflowing with Palestinians with broken arms, bullet wounds and tear-gas poisoning. One wonders what all their suffering was for. After all, the only thing they want is an opportunity to exercise their right to self-determination, the right to live freely in the land of their forefathers, and the right to decide their own destiny.

Tel Aviv's policy of terror, violence and repression against the Arab population of the occupied territories and its violation of the universally recognized norms of international law - primarily the United Nations Charter, the relevant resolutions of the Security Council and of the General Assembly, and the Geneva Convention - deserve to be condemned. Of course, any terrorist acts deserve

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to be condemned, no matter who carries them out, and whether the terrorism is perpetrated by a State or by individuals.

The overwhelming majority of the Members of the United Nations urgently demand an immediate halt to the unlawful practices of the Israeli authorities on the West Bank and in Gaza. They also demand full compliance by the Israeli authorities with the 1949 Geneva Convention. The actions of the ruling circles of Israel are complicating the efforts of the international community to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East, and this is happening at a time when the uprising of the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza has once again highlighted the pressing need for such a peace to be attained as soon as possible.

In order for movement towards peace to be started, there is a need, first and foremost, for a desire - a desire on the part of both sides - to begin such a movement. The Arab countries have several times, including quite recently at the summit in Algeria, confirmed their readiness to reach a settlement on the basis of the principles adopted in 1982 in Fez and within the framework of an international peace conference. Moreover, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) recently published a statement emphasizing its commitment to a political solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict and its readiness to take part in negotiations within the framework of an international conference. That document reflects the desire of the PLO to achieve the establishment of peace in the Middle East, on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), and the recognition of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination within the framework of an international conference under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation of the five permanent members of the Security Council, as well as all parties involved, including the PLO and the Government of Israel. This approach to the framework of a settlement reflects the recent positive developments in the

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position of the PLO. Unfortunately this well-balanced policy has not yet met with a response from the Israeli leaders.

There is now a mounting understanding in the world of the fact that one cannot build one's own security except by taking into account the security of other peoples and their desire to decide their own fate entirely by themselves. Peace can be established in the Middle East, but on one essential condition: that one of the peoples living there must not understand the exercise of its own rights as meaning the suppression of the rights of others, and that the Israeli and Arab peoples, including, obviously, the Palestinians, must be able, to an equal degree, to exercise their right to life, freedom and happiness.

We are deeply convinced that the attainment, at an international conference under United Nations auspices, of a just and comprehensive settlement, duly taking into account the legitimate interests of all parties to the conflict, will lead to the solution of the problems of the Middle East, including the crucial Palestinian problem.

Mr. VRAALSEN (Norway): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the four Nordic countries - Denmark, Finland, Sweden and Norway.

We have followed the seriously deteriorating situation in the occupied territories of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip over the last 11 months with deep concern. The unabated violence and suffering resulting from the continuing Israeli occupation is a persistent reminder of the urgent need for progress on the diplomatic front. More than 20 years of occupation has unavoidably bred tension and violence. The main responsibility for the present situation thus rests with the occupying Power. Attempts to quell legitimate aspirations among Palestinians through the application of repressive measures have further enhanced the widespread

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bitterness with and resistance against the Israeli occupation. All acts of terror and violence, from whatever quarter they may come, must be condemned. The spiral of violence has to be broken.

(Mr. Vraalsen, Norway)

The repressive Israeli measures entail violations of Israel's obligations under international law and with regard to human rights. In the course of the uprising we have witnessed a variety of illegal and unacceptable Israeli policies and practices. Such acts as the opening of fire by the Israeli army against defenceless civilians, beatings and the use of plastic bullets clearly represent excessive use of force. It is an indisputable fact that the effect of the use of such means as plastic bullets is often lethal.

We also strongly deplore the imposition of various administrative and economic measures in the occupied territories to counter the uprising, such as the deportation of civilians, the demolishing of houses, collective punishment and detention without trial. We appeal to Israel to desist from these practices forthwith and to accord the inhabitants of the occupied territories the protection they are entitled to under international law.

It is our firm conviction that the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, applies to the Territories occupied by Israel since 1967. We call upon Israel to accept the de jure applicability of the Convention and fully to comply with its obligations under that Convention. Both are necessary. The obligations ensuing from the Fourth Geneva Convention cannot be met by a declaration of de facto acceptance or imperfect compliance. It should also be noted that, according to international law, the occupying Power is not entitled, as a general rule, to extend its own law or jurisdiction to an occupied area.

The continuing occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip is unacceptable to the inhabitants of the territories and to the international community. The exacerbation of the situation resulting from the occupation has rendered a prolongation of the status quo intolerable. It is now, more than ever, incumbent

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on all concerned to work for a political solution. Such a solution should satisfy both the legitimate right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, with all that that implies, and the right of Israel, like other States in the area, to live in peace within secure and recognized borders, free from threats or acts of force, on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

We firmly believe that the holding of an international peace conference on the Middle East under the auspices of the United Nations with the participation of all parties directly concerned represents the best way to achieve a negotiated settlement.

To get the process going, it is of fundamental importance that Israel and the Palestinians recognize each other's rights. In this spirit we call upon the Palestinians to recognize Israel's right to exist within secure and recognized borders and we call upon Israel to recognize the Palestinians' right to self-determination.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): I now call upon Mrs. Absa Claude Diallo, representative of Senegal and Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

Mrs. DIALLO (Senegal), Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (interpretation from French): On behalf of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, I should like to say how much we share the concerns that have led the States of the Arab Group to request the convening of this meeting devoted to the uprising in the occupied territories. On many occasions our Committee has urgently drawn the attention of the General Assembly and the Security Council to the tragic situation prevailing in the occupied Palestinian territories as a result of the policies and practices of Israel, the occupying Power, aimed at crushing the Palestinian uprising.

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Rights of the Palestinian People)

Indeed, since December 1987, 16 letters on this subject have been addressed to the Secretary-General of our Organization and to the President of the Security Council to express the Committee's very deep concern over events in the occupied Palestinian territories, and to urge that measures be taken urgently to ensure the population's protection. At the same time, we have also asked for an intensification of efforts to find a comprehensive political solution.

Others have raised their voices with ours against repressive measures of all kinds taken by the Israeli military authorities in the occupied territories. Thus, the League of Arab States, the Organization of African Unity, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the States members of the European Community, the Nordic States, the States Parties to the Warsaw Treaty, the States members of the Association of South-East Asian Nations, the States members of the Caribbean Community and many Governments have expressed their concern in decisions and statements and called on Israel, the occupying Power, to respect the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

Similarly, participants in the non-governmental organizations' seminars and meetings sponsored in recent months by our Committee have been unanimous in expressing their disquiet over the continuous deterioration of the situation and their support for the Palestinian people in the heroic struggle it is waging to exercise its right to self-determination, independence and sovereignty in accordance with the provisions of the Charter and the relevant United Nations resolutions.

Among the members of non-governmental organizations and individuals who have taken part in those seminars, many have been from the occupied territories or have visited the region at various times since the beginning of the uprising. Alarming

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and overwhelming testimony has thus been given to the Committee that makes us better able to gauge the dimensions of the suffering endured by the population, a full account of which could not be gleaned from the information in certain media, which are restricted by military censorship and as a result of curfews.

In the light of the information received, we know that there have been several hundreds of Palestinians killed, many young children among them, and also thousands of wounded.

Need we now mention the measures taken by the occupying Power to brutalize and intimidate the Palestinian populations: mass arrests and mistreatment, collective punishments, closure of schools and universities, expropriations, the demolition of houses and the destruction of economic infrastructures?

This is compounded by everything we have learned from the witnesses about what is going on out of sight of the television cameras and the accredited foreign correspondents. Frequent deadly gunfire, beatings not only of stone-throwing children but also of members of their families, food shortages created in areas subjected to lengthy curfews, taxation of food donations from abroad, the chemical contamination of crops grown in communal gardens and the existence of death squads are all practices at which the conscience revolts, that make the chances of establishing peace in that region more remote and that violate the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949.

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The Committee over which I preside would like, through me, to recall here certain relevant articles of that Fourth Geneva Convention which apply particularly to the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories.

Article 27 stipulates:

"Protected persons are entitled, in all circumstances, to respect for their person ... They shall at all times be humanely treated, and shall be protected especially against all acts of violence or threats thereof".

In article 32 it is stated:

"The High Contracting Parties specifically agree that each of them is prohibited from taking any measure of such a character as to cause the physical suffering or extermination of protected persons".

This prohibition particularly applies to any "measures of brutality whether applied by civilian or military agents".

In article 33 it is stated:

"No protected person may be punished for an offence he or she has not personally committed. Collective penalties and likewise all measures of intimidation or of terrorism are prohibited".

Article 49 stipulates:

"Individual or mass forcible transfers, as well as deportations of protected persons from occupied territory to the territory of the occupying Power or to that of any other country, occupied or not, are prohibited, regardless of their motive".

Israel claims that it is applying the Geneva Convention de facto while refusing to consider it applicable de jure in the occupied Palestinian territories, but the events of the past 10 months show that in fact Israel is violating the

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Convention and has been doing so since the beginning of the occupation. One of the principal reasons for the Palestinian uprising is this constant violation.

In the view of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, it is time that the High Contracting Parties fulfilled the obligation incumbent on them under article 1 of the Convention, which stipulates:

"The High Contracting Parties undertake to respect and to ensure respect for the present Convention in all circumstances".

At several meetings of non-governmental organizations organized this year under the auspices of the Committee, the participants have by a large majority requested all Governments to declare categorically that their bilateral relations with Israel would be compromised by these violations of the Geneva Convention. In its recommendations to the General Assembly, our Committee has associated itself with these urgent appeals addressed to the High Contracting Parties.

Likewise, in his report of 21 January the Secretary-General of the United Nations recommended measures that the High Contracting Parties should take and indicated in detail the various means of protection for the population of the occupied territories which could be ensured by the international community.

Thus the Committee could not but welcome the statement made on 26 August 1988 by the President of the Security Council, on behalf of the members of the Council, calling on the High Contracting Parties to ensure respect for the provisions of the Convention.

Our Committee has also been heartened by the many measures taken by non-governmental organizations, trade unions and individuals, as well as by the emergency relief assistance given by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and other United Nations bodies. However,

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these efforts deserve to be expanded and supported. The United Nations system, which has an immense historical responsibility with regard to the Palestinian people, should spare no efforts in its quest for effective measures for the protection of that people. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, over which I have the privilege of presiding, is grateful to the Secretary-General for the constructive role he has played in this regard and at this time wishes to encourage him to continue to do everything in his power to ensure effective protection for the Palestinian population living in the occupied territories.

The goal of our Committee is to defuse tension, to break the cycle of violence and thus to prepare the way for a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the Palestinian question on the basis of the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights in accordance with the United Nations resolutions. In this regard, our Committee would like once again to reaffirm its conviction that the international community has the duty to convene the International Peace Conference on the Middle East. Promoting peace in the Middle East requires us first to work for the convening of that Conference, in which, together with all the other parties to the conflict, the Palestine Liberation Organization should participate, since the Palestinian people has chosen it to make its voice and its aspirations heard.

Thus the Committee, for its part, wishes once again to make an appeal to the Security Council and to all concerned or interested parties as a matter of urgency to take measures that could assist in a reconciliation of views, so that that Conference, on which such hopes are pinned, could finally be held.

Mr. BEIN (Israel): On 23 September the General Assembly allocated agenda item 77 to the Special Political Committee. Since then nothing has transpired to justify a reversal of that decision. Regrettably, this procedure demonstrates once again a very specific misuse of the General Assembly. It is not being used to promote peace, but rather, to the contrary, it is being misused to incite and instigate more violence and more suffering among both Israelis and Palestinian Arabs.

We are facing a period of rejuvenation of the United Nations. Countries around the world engaged in long-standing disputes have agreed to seek peace. They have agreed to enter direct negotiations; and they have sought the good offices of the United Nations to help them facilitate these arrangements. Undoubtedly, we are in the midst of taking meaningful strides towards making the world a safer place.

Yet, as we have all witnessed, a number of Arab countries refuse to accept this spirit of peace. Instead, they hijack this Organization and use it as another arm in their battle against Israel.

It is sad to note that while, on one hand, Arab leaders have recognized the new climate in international relations - one in which direct negotiations replace confrontation - on the other hand, some of them believe that this climate does not govern their conduct vis-à-vis Israel. These leaders simply wish to retain the option of waging wars.

(Mr. Bein, Israel)

This kind of slanted debate does not help to restore tranquillity. It does not help the Palestinian Arabs, nor does it advance the fulfilment of their political aspirations. It does not promote peace. It certainly does not further a political dialogue or direct negotiations between Israel, its neighbouring countries and the Palestinian Arabs residing in the territories administered by Israel. On the contrary, this debate incites and encourages violence. It obstructs the path towards direct negotiations. It blocks agreements on peace. This is the real intent of the debate.

The use of violence in any form and to any extent to impose conditions upon Israel will not work. Violence only complicates the situation in Judea, Samaria and Gaza. For as long as it continues Israel will exercise its right and do its duty under international law to restore order in the face of violent provocation. We will continue to do so with maximum restraint and in full compliance with the laws enacted not by Israel but by those that governed these areas for almost half a century well before Israel took control of them.

The soldiers of Israel are trained to fight in the battlefield; they are not trained to confront civilians who have been incited and coerced by the PLO and fundamentalist instigators to hurl firebombs at them. We, like no other country I know, teach our soldiers to abide by the highest moral and ethical code.

Yet, despite this, Israel's actions to restore a normal life to these areas have been depicted by some speakers as inhumane. I would say that to most of the world, the word "inhumane" has other meanings: to be inhumane is to burn families alive by firebombs; to be inhumane is to plant bombs in civilian buses; to be inhumane is to throw grenades at sidewalk cafés, at toyshops full of children; to be inhumane is deliberately and systematically to kill or maim innocent civilians. At the same time, it is only human, and a human duty, to defend oneself, and to

(Mr. Bein, Israel)

defend innocent, uninvolved civilians, both Jew and Arab. Indeed, according to international law - referred to abundantly in the Assembly - it is the human, civil and political obligation of the "administering Power", it is our human, civil and political responsibility, to maintain public order.

The common denominators of the factions of the PLO are extremism and violence. And the central theme of the PLO's covenant remains the destruction of Israel. The PLO does not accept Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), and by its obscure reservations and conditions attempts to drain these resolutions of any meaningful content. The PLO demonstrates again with its latest declarations and actions that it is incapable of adopting any concept of genuine peace and is unwilling to cease terrorism.

Indeed, the draft resolution before us does nothing but encourage intransigence, incite hostility and promote even more violence. There is no call to the residents of the territories to exercise any measure of restraint and refrain from violence. The draft resolution ignores completely the violent nature of the activities of the residents directed against both Jew and Arab, which have obliged Israel to take appropriate measures to restore calm and tranquillity. There is not even an allusion to the fact that only a political solution can solve this problem, and of course no mention of the only commonly accepted basis for such a solution, namely Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

The essence of the draft resolution is to perpetuate the problem and distance the prospects of peace. It attempts to engage the Secretary-General and the United Nations in this disastrous course of action, rather than provide any hope for peace. To vote for such a draft resolution will be to vote against aspirations to peace in the Middle East; it will be to endorse further human misery on both sides.

(Mr. Bein, Israel)

Israel reserves the right to revert to these matters in greater depth at the appropriate time and during the debates allocated in the original programme of work of the General Assembly. I wish, however, to conclude by stating that Israel wants to further the process of peace. We believe that true negotiated peace with all our neighbours is feasible, and that in the framework of these negotiations on peace and coexistence we can also reach a solution to the problems and aspirations of the Palestinian Arabs in the area.

Mr. MUDENGE (Zimbabwe): Sir, the Zimbabwe delegation at the highest level has already had occasion to congratulate you on your election to the presidency of the forty-third session of the General Assembly. I wish, however, to express my own great pleasure and that of the members of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries at seeing you, an admired leader of the Movement, in the Chair this afternoon.

During the session we have heard much about détente and the outbreak of peace in the world. There is some justification for this. In general, for most of mankind, the world is a safer place today than it was last year at this time. But we should be mistaken if we concluded that this sense of hope is shared by all mankind. In Palestine this is not so. The people of occupied Palestine are locked in a bitter and painful struggle. They are being shot and killed; their limbs beaten and broken; their homes destroyed. They are refugees in their own land. Humiliated, despised, they are responding in desperation, but with great courage and determination. The intifadah is their courageous appeal - nay, cry - to the conscience of mankind. The international community should not sit idly by, watching this desperate modern human tragedy, without responding.

(Mr. Mudenge, Zimbabwe)

The Jewish people have known pain and tragedy in their long and eventful history. They have little to learn from others about suffering and tragedy and they are right when they refuse to be lectured. But having suffered pain and tragedy in one's history is no justification for meting out the same treatment to others. The fact that over 20 million Africans were lost during the period of the slave trade and about 11 million Red Indians had to be decimated in order to bring "western Christian civilization" to the Americas has not earned for the Africans and the Red Indians immunity from criticism when they inflict suffering on other people. The same is true of Israeli practices in occupied Palestine.

Fear should not be used as a justification for Israel's causing so much human pain and suffering to the Palestinian people. Israel, as an occupying Power, has clear obligations under the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 and the relevant Security Council resolutions to protect the Palestinian people. This is a legal obligation and the international community has a duty to ensure that Israel abides by it.

We welcome the unprecedented action taken by the President of the Security Council for August when he called in the Ambassador of Israel to express concern at the manner in which the Israelis were treating the Palestinians, and demanded that such action cease. In his report (S/19443) following the mission to the Middle East, the Secretary-General made a number of important suggestions as to how the international media could enhance the protection of Palestinians in the occupied territories by reporting fully and regularly on what was happening there. At its recent meeting the Co-ordinating Bureau of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries issued an urgent communiqué, on 26 October, calling on the Security Council to consider the Secretary-General's report with a view to the implementation of its recommendations. We also urge the media, including the United Nations Department

(Mr. Mudenge, Zimbabwe)

of Public Information, and other agencies helping the Palestinian refugees to publicize actively and regularly the truth of what is happening to the Palestinian people. We appeal from this rostrum to the Security Council to ensure that the recommendations in the Secretary-General's report are fully implemented.

The General Assembly is therefore right to be dealing with this matter in this special manner at this juncture, when hope for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East has been further damaged by the results of the recent elections in Israel. All we hear now is talk of crushing the peaceful protest of the Palestinians by using the iron fist. Sabre-rattling is the order of the day. Knowing those who make these threats, we know that they are not empty threats. There is no doubt that, unless the international community raises its voice loudly and demands the immediate convening of the Middle East peace conference, under United Nations auspices much innocent blood will soon be flowing in Gaza, the West Bank and other occupied Arab territories, including Jerusalem.

Peace and a free, independent Palestine will surely come one day, but until that day we all have an obligation to fight for the protection of the people under occupation. Neither deportation nor decimation should be allowed to succeed. It is for this reason that all who cherish peace and human rights should now stand up and be counted.

The draft resolution before us today is consciously couched in restrained and measured tones. Its scope is limited. Its sponsors have gone out of their way to accommodate as many viewpoints as possible. It is the hope of my delegation and that of the non-aligned countries that every member of this Assembly will be able to vote for it.

The representative of Israel has called for direct negotiations and new political dialogue in the Middle East. This Assembly has time and again urged

(Mr. Mudenge, Zimbabwe)

Israel to carry out direct negotiations with the Palestinians, through their representative, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). We hope that this call by Israel marks a new and genuine change of heart.

The PRESIDENT: I call now on the Observer of the League of Arab States, in accordance with resolution 477 (XV) of the General Assembly.

Mr. MAKSOUD (League of Arab States) (interpretation from Arabic): The Palestinian intifadah in the occupied Arab territories is nearly a year old and becoming stronger and more determined in the face of the futile brutality of the Israeli response and the ferocity of the attempt to put an end to it.

This new phenomenon, a natural response to the continued Israeli occupation, has reopened the file on the Palestinian cause, which is the essence of the Arab-Israeli conflict and has brought the Zionist entity face to face with the necessity of making a decisive choice, thus forcing it out of the prevarication and evasiveness to which it has always resorted in its attempt to perpetuate its occupation.

Thus the intifadah, after only one year, has dissipated many ambiguities and introduced new inputs to the Middle East equation. Such inputs cannot be erased or circumvented in dealing with the Middle East crisis.

Foremost among those inputs is the affirmation of the issue of Palestinian national independence, which has become both an impregnable and an irrevocable historical fact. The fact that the intifadah has withstood nearly a year all Israel's attempts to contain or abort it is positive proof of the inevitable collapse of the occupation, and the impossibility of erasing Palestinian rights from the equation of the Middle East conflict.

(Mr. Maksoud, League
of Arab States)

This great achievement of the intifadah cannot be belittled because it is still within the realm of possibility. Its real value stems from the new form of struggle it has introduced and the creative energy contained in that new form of struggle promises to translate the potential for Palestinian independence into established fact.

It stands to reason that this new form of struggle is neither an isolated phenomenon nor a passing retaliatory reflex. On the contrary, it is ultimately the sum total of a long history of struggle rooted in the legacy of the Palestinian people and their great sacrifices in the past four decades of resistance to the Zionist entity, its policies, its settler-colonialist designs and its uprooting of the Palestinian people.

In the history of every national liberation movement resistance is the expression of rejection and, at the same time, of optimism. It is the categorical rejection of occupation and of the confiscation of every right and freedom by the occupying Power. It is also the optimism of belief in the inevitability of freedom and the restoration of the right to self-determination, and of absolute faith in ultimate victory.

The Palestinian intifadah, being the form Palestinian resistance has taken in the interior, is both the rejection and the optimism of which I have spoken. In addition, it is a process of rectification and of setting the record straight. It corrects the much-touted impression that the Palestinians have acquiesced in the occupation, accepted it as unavoidable and abandoned the attempt to face up to it because of their impotence. It also corrects the erroneous notion that the Arabs in general and the Palestinians in particular fight for their rights only intermittently and lack stamina and steadfastness. Above all, it corrects the persistent distortion promoted by Zionism and nurtured by the Western media that

(Mr. Maksoud, League
of Arab States)

categorizes Palestinian action as a form of individual adventurism of a terrorist nature. The uprising gave the lie to all this. It showed in its true light the confrontation with the Israeli occupation and, in deeds not words, demonstrated once for all the true nature of that confrontation as an ongoing all-embracing process in which all Palestinians, regardless of their political or social leaning, are totally involved. Thus things have become clear and disciplined, while the clouds of frustration and despair which lead to adventurism have been dispelled.

Undoubtedly, this outcome of the struggle is proof of the profound maturity of the Palestinians. This maturity has expressed itself in the inner structure of the intifadah, which has adopted from its inception, and throughout the ongoing confrontation with the occupying authorities, new forms of organization in all the areas of mobilization, political action and even day-to-day life, which have imbued it with the strength and immunity necessary to face up to the occupation.

Various committees have been set up to meet the needs of the movement and the inhabitants. Their tasks continue to be modified and developed in line with the escalation of the repressive terrorist measures of the occupying Power. Thus the committees have been enabled to function successfully in organizing the life of the inhabitants and providing them with the wherewithal to bear the harsh conditions of the Israeli occupation and step up the resistance. They have also succeeded in co-ordinating the day-to-day activities of the heroes of the intifadah. In short, those national committees have been transformed into a sort of establishment within the framework of the intifadah. They have become the solid foundation which provide the resistance with the means of continuity and development.

(Mr. Maksoud, League
of Arab States)

That is why all the measures of the occupying authorities and the violence of their repression have failed to stop the intifadah in its tracks and subvert its inner structure. The people have turned to popular committees and, on the solid basis of this all-embracing national cohesiveness, the effectiveness of the intifadah has been demonstrated on several levels and gains have continued to be made in many areas.

At the Palestinian level, the most important achievement has been the consolidation of national unity by giving the highest priority to the aim of defeating the occupation and gaining national independence. This is also demonstrated in the reaffirmation of Palestinian cohesiveness around the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. The intifadah has crystallized a sort of collective Palestinian awareness of the need to deal with new variables by promoting national unity through the Palestinian National Council, which will meet in Algeria shortly. Undoubtedly, this awareness will open new and wide horizons before the intifadah and give momentum to its striving after Palestinian national independence.

At the Arab level, the intifadah has helped to initiate elements of reform and stimulate the cycle of cohesive national Arab thought, thus acting as a catalyst in moving the Arab situation forward from acquiescing in the deteriorating fait accompli, and also promoting solidarity and the closing of ranks.

It has also introduced into the political life of the Arabs the vitality of hope, with all that that entails. This has enhanced the climate of Arab détente, as reflected in the last Algerian summit. Détente is necessary to provide the intifadah with the required national support and steadfastness.

(Mr. Maksoud, League
of Arab States)

In this context, we regard the intifadah, in its totality and continuity and all that it represents, as a new method of non-violence in the struggle against the Israeli occupation.

(Mr. Maksoud, League of Arab States)

The intifadah has formulated the new Arab political language. It is the language of clarity that derives from a clear vision and the language of responsibility. Thus the happenings in the Palestinian arena have imparted a new perspective to the concept of non-violence in the struggle for peace.

Violence is the style of the occupying authorities, first and foremost. To the intifadah it is a last resort, not a plan of action, as is the Israeli occupation. Therefore, the international community must reward the adoption of non-violence in the service of peace and inalienable rights. This is not a negative attitude, as the leaders of the Zionist entity claim. On the contrary, it is non-violence. It is the laying bare of the negative Israeli attitude towards peace and every draft or project that has to do with peace, especially the international conference. When this Israeli stance is laid bare the very nature of the Zionist entity and its expansionist designs, which run counter to the cause of a just and comprehensive peace, is revealed. This doubly telling exposure of Israel's designs and practices has given the intifadah, the bastion of Palestinian rights, a rampart of credibility against which the bargaining and wheeling and dealing have floundered. No longer will it be possible to auction Palestinian rights. Through the intifadah, those rights have entered a historical phase. This new development has given the Arab side an opportunity to speak to the world public from a position of clarity, action and perseverance and, at the same time, of openness and responsibility in the interest of the achievement of real peace in the Middle East.

The second input by the intifadah, to the political and intellectual map of the area is the political crisis it has generated inside the Zionist entity and the

(Mr. Maksoud, League of Arab States)

beginning of the drawing of lines between supporters and opponents in Jewish circles throughout the world.

While the intifadah derives its vitality and viability from its comprehensive character and new form, it has been able to profit also from its ability to bring out the contradictions in Israel, zionism and Jewish communities throughout the world. It has achieved this through the continued Palestinian confrontation with Israeli occupation over the past year. That confrontation, while bringing to light the worst traits of the Zionist entity - that is, ferocity, repression and terrorism - has moved the conscience of broad sectors of Jews in Israel and throughout the world. Naturally, we have welcomed and continue to welcome this movement, this effort, in Jewish circles, which has been the source of petitions and protests against the practices of the occupying Power in the West Bank, Gaza and Jerusalem, the demonstrations by the peace movement within Israel and the refusal of some Israelis to do military service in Israel and the occupied territories.

Those protests have given rise to debate within the Jewish circles between two schools of thought: the school that advocates the unleashing of Zionist racism and that which upholds the human values which stem from Judaism and the Jewish legacy. However, the Zionist entity and its international extensions have hastened to stifle this trend, repress it and prevent its growth in the Jewish arena by practising intellectual terrorism against those Jews who have started to have second thoughts about the Zionist legacy and practices.

The disquiet displayed by such elements with regard to the aggressive Israeli policies in the occupied territories may turn into outright condemnation and a kind

(Mr. Maksoud, League of Arab States)

contain and obliterate it in its usual manner - that is to say with the bludgeon of anti-Semitism or "self-hatred". This is what Israel fears most, because it cannot easily accuse Jews who condemn its practices of being anti-Semitic. Hence, it cannot use its most effective weapon that it has perfected, the tragedy of the Holocaust, to silence those who criticize or dare to object.

The time has come for the West to break loose from its guilt complex concerning that tragedy when dealing with the Middle East crisis. The Zionist entity has exploited that guilt long enough in covering up the tragedy of the Palestinian people. That guilt has been thoroughly exploited by Israel for blackmail and not forgiveness. Then the intifadah of the heroes of the stones set those sensitivities alight and intensified the debate between the two schools of thought to which I have referred. Here the Zionist entity found itself faced by a double dilemma that involved a crisis of the entity itself and a crisis of Zionist legitimacy.

It became apparent in the course of the election campaign that the political differences between the various Israeli parties were nurtured mainly by that dilemma. The day before yesterday the Israeli elections renewed that political dilemma, which has now lasted for four years. In the face of this reality it seems that paralysis, at best, is the destiny awaiting the peace initiatives. It is even possible that those initiatives may collapse altogether and be completely wiped out by the intransigence of those who may come to power and rule for the next few years. All the indicators point in that direction. The Likud is vehemently stressing the need to repeat the Camp David experiment, which was a thunderbolt

(Mr. Maksoud, League of Arab States)

that caused an explosion in Lebanon and the occupied territories. Thus it seems that what it has in store for the region is a new explosion, not a new option. It is now clear that the Likud, which is going to rule in partnership with its allies, will try to follow the Camp David pattern and insist on its repetition, in an attempt to hoodwink world public opinion, which may be gullible enough to believe what the forces of intransigence and ossification really want. The Camp David accords were in fact no more than a new licence for Israel to persist in its annexationist course and unleash its machine of aggression on the area. The results of this have been the building of more settlements and colonies in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, the annexation of the Golan Heights and Jerusalem, and the announcement that Jerusalem is Israel's capital, followed by the invasion of Lebanon and the unleashing of the Zionist machine of repression and terrorism in the occupied Arab territories.

(Mr. Maksoud, League of Arab States)

These are the fruits of Camp David. The Likud is trying to renew the licence and the method of singling out the States of the area and dictating conditions that can only subject them to Israeli hegemony. When the Likud raises the Camp David slogan anew we must remember that it is the Israeli party that categorically rejects, the idea of the international conference, as endorsed by the General Assembly and of any withdrawal from the occupied territories. Bearing this in mind, we can deduce that today Camp David means only a preconceived attempt to evade the natural outcome of an international conference if, such a conference is convened. Any action based on international legitimacy, such as the complete Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, East Jerusalem, the Golan and southern Lebanon and the establishment of the Palestinian State, would wipe out the Camp David formula and its consequences. So the Likud wishes only to lure the Arab side into a labyrinth in which the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people may be lost. Camp David and its results are the antithesis of the international conference.

Egypt, the partner at Camp David, was the first to realize the failure of that experiment. Egypt suffered a lot of embarrassment and bitterness when Israel let loose its schemes of annexations and acts of aggression in the area under the umbrella of the Camp David agreement, which shackled Egypt and temporarily pushed it out of the arena of the Arab-Israeli conflict. However, the Egyptian people, who realized this, are becoming more and more aware of the consequences of the agreement, which have indeed been nefarious. We look forward to an Egypt freed from the Camp David bonds. It must focus its attention on the bitterness of the experience and the suffering and destructive results at both the Arab and the Egyptian level. Egypt is called upon at this point to expose the designs and

(Mr. Maksoud, League of Arab States)

attempts of the Likud as nothing but the use of the Camp David accords as a pretext for wiping out the national rights of the Palestinian people.

The League of Arab States is strangely in favour of restoring to Egypt its leading Arab role. The League also believes that there is an opportunity today for Egypt to grapple with Israel's prevarications, because we are confident that the Egyptian people will not allow Israel's intransigence to establish a distorted translation of Camp David that can result only in greater volatility in the area and the confiscation of Palestinian Arab rights.

We realize the urgent need for the international community to act and to do whatever can be done, especially through the United States of America and the United Nations. The intifadah has generated an international climate more favourable to the Palestinian cause and has given that cause a balanced presence in any potential international dialogue. It has provided the conditions for an international conference, with a role for the United Nations.

The Arab side has always upheld the role of the United Nations in solving international problems and has been a strong advocate of the promotion of this international Organization so that it may fulfil its role to the best of its ability. Today we perceive that there are opportunities for the international Organization to reopen the file on the Middle East, especially that part relating to Palestine. The restoration today, after the phase of marginalization, of the Organization's original authority and credibility through the establishment of the necessary principles for the solution of such regional problems as those concerning the cessation of the Iraq-Iran war, Cyprus, Namibia and Angola, makes it possible for the United Nations to reopen that file.

(Mr. Maksoud, League of Arab States)

The Arab side therefore calls on the world Organization to translate its credibility in the arena of the Arab-Israeli conflict into an initiative imposing sanctions against Israel, that international outlaw. The Arab side looks forward to the performance by the United Nations of its unique role. It hopes and demands that the Middle East crisis will share in the benefits of this renewal of the credibility of the world Organization so that this crisis may not be left behind by the new tide because of the intransigence of Israel.

It must be said, however, that this intransigence would not be able to stand up against international unanimity without America's support. American permissiveness towards Israel's policies and the diplomatic cover Washington extends to Israel are behind Israel's persistent policy and its rejection of all resolutions adopted against it. This is well known. The United States of America is still ambiguous in its proposals for peace and its consideration of an international peace conference, as proposed by the Arab side and supported internationally. This ambiguity is reflected in the Shultz programme. It calls for "land for peace", without being specific. It addresses the rights of the Palestinian people without being specific about the nature of those rights. It does not support negotiating on these issues in the framework of an international conference.

It is regrettable that the candidates for the presidency of the United States - Bush and Dukakis - merely reiterate old positions, which is not a good augury. The United States has exhausted its ability at a time when the intifadah has been decisive about the inevitability of an independent State on Arab soil. These are inputs that are non-negotiable, otherwise the negotiations within the framework of an international conference would result in the production of cosmetic

(Mr. Maksoud, League of Arab States)

changes, although there is unanimity throughout the world regarding Palestinian rights. However, the United States is alone in embracing every Israeli argument, although those arguments are but contrived obstacles aimed at impeding a just peace in the area.

In the light of all this entails of danger to world peace, we hope that the future American Administration will reconsider, perceive the dangers and formulate a new policy, taking into consideration the requirements of a just peace rather than supporting the policies and intransigence of Israel, because that serves neither American interests in the area nor the cause of world peace and runs counter to the climate of détente now prevailing between the two super-Powers.

(Mr. Maksoud, League of Arab States)

The blessed Palestinian intifadah is today on the threshold today of its second year. It has deep roots and continues with steadfastness despite the overwhelming onslaught of the Israeli occupation forces. It has deprived the Zionist entity of its cherished feelings of superiority. Israel has become shaken and emotional, while the intifadah has remained active. All the efforts of the occupying Power have been vain. The intifadah has refused to respond in kind to the indiscriminate brutality of the occupation authorities. This has been a surprise to the Zionist entity and has led to a media explosion, especially in the West. It has awakened large sectors of international public opinion, and focused that opinion on Palestinian rights and Israel's racism. Thus, the intifadah has demonstrated its renewed ability to achieve more gains for the Palestinian people.

The Palestinian train, thanks to the intifadah, has left the station after a long delay. It will not stop before reaching the terminus of self-determination and independence.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): I have to inform members that Gambia has become a sponsor of draft resolution A/43/L.21.

Before the Assembly takes a decision on draft resolution A/43/L.21, I shall call on those representatives who wish to explain their vote before the voting. I remind delegations that, in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. OKUN (United States of America): My Government will vote against the draft resolution presented here today, for we believe this measure hinders the search for peace in the region. It is an unbalanced document, by which the Assembly would condemn one of the parties for its actions without taking into account acts of violence by the other side. The harsh rhetoric in this draft

(Mr. Okun, United States)

resolution and in this debate can only inflame an already embittered situation, making it more difficult to proceed towards a negotiated settlement. The adoption of a divisive draft resolution of this kind at this time can only impede the important political processes at work in the region.

In this draft resolution the Assembly urges the Security Council to act on the Secretary-General's report (S/19443), of 21 January 1988. That report calls for the convening of an international Middle East peace conference under United Nations auspices. The United States considers that the concept of a conference established by outside parties to impose solutions or veto agreements is mistaken and badly flawed. The United States believes that, while a conference may be necessary to facilitate bilateral face-to-face negotiations, it is only through such negotiations between the parties concerned that a solution can be found to the Middle East conflict.

My Government's opposition to this draft resolution should not be construed as indifference to the plight of the Palestinian people and to the current situation in the occupied territories. On the contrary, the United States is gravely concerned over developments there and we remain actively engaged in efforts to reduce tensions in the region. We have condemned all acts of violence and have urged restraint by all parties. We grieve for the loss of life on both sides. Israel has a responsibility to maintain order in the occupied territories. At the same time, the United States is firmly on record as supporting the applicability to the occupied territories of the Fourth Geneva Convention and we have criticized actions that are inconsistent with the Convention.

In our view, continuation of the status quo in the occupied territories can lead only to more violence. American policy is clear. Ultimately, the situation in the occupied territories can be resolved only in the context of a negotiated settlement - a comprehensive, durable settlement reached through negotiations based

(Mr. Okun, United States)

on United Nations Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). This will require an exchange of territory for peace. The security of the State of Israel must be assured. At the same time, the legitimate political rights of the Palestinian people must be recognized. We believe direct negotiations between the parties, facilitated if necessary by a properly structured international conference, offer the only realistic basis for achieving such a settlement. The United States will continue to work towards that objective.

In the coming weeks the General Assembly will devote its attention to numerous issues related to the Middle East. Members should reflect carefully on the importance of these questions and ask themselves whether a more constructive, less contentious approach can be achieved. Over the years the Assembly has adopted a long train of divisive, unhelpful resolutions on the Middle East, to no avail. In particular, we recall resolution 3379 (XXX), of over a decade ago, which asserted that Zionism is a form of racism and brought deserved shame upon this body. It is time to desist from strident rhetoric and one-sided resolutions.

If the General Assembly wishes to promote efforts towards a negotiated settlement, it should urge reconciliation and dialogue between the parties. In so doing, this body would make a genuine contribution to the search for a just and lasting peace in the Middle East - that peace which is sought by all those who cherish the noble ideals of the Charter of the United Nations.

Mr. ZAMANI (Islamic Republic of Iran): My delegation will vote in favour of draft resolution A/43/L.21. We have decided after painstaking thought not to become a sponsor of this draft resolution. Our decision has been a very difficult one. It is not because we do not support whole-heartedly the uprising in Palestine; it is not because we do not hold that the Zionist régime occupying Palestine has consistently committed crimes of every sort against the Palestinian

(Mr. Zamani, Islamic Republic
of Iran)

people; it is not because we do not condemn the Zionist régime's persistent and criminal policies and practices against the Palestinian people in the occupied territories. Our decision is mainly due to the fact that the draft resolution does not call for restoration of the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to establish their own independent State in the homeland of Palestine, which has been occupied since 1948.

The massive popular uprising of the Palestinian Muslims in the occupied territories and the increasing savagery of the Zionist agents and policy-makers bring glad tidings of inevitable victory and long overdue liberation.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/43/L.21.

The voting process has begun.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burma, Burundi, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Cuba, Cyprus, Czechoslovakia, Democratic Kampuchea, Democratic Yemen, Denmark, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, German Democratic Republic, Germany, Federal Republic of, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Romania, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Somalia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Swaziland, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against: Israel, United States of America

Abstaining: Antigua and Barbuda, Belize, Canada, Costa Rica, Dominica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Grenada, Iceland, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Zaire

Draft resolution A/43/L.21 was adopted by 130 votes to 2, with 16 abstentions (resolution 43/21).

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): I shall now call on those representatives who wish to make statements in explanation of vote.

Sir Crispin TICKELL (United Kingdom): The views of my Government on Israeli policies and practices towards the inhabitants of the occupied territories are abundantly clear. Our position was set out during the debate by the Permanent Representative of Greece, speaking on behalf of the twelve members of the European Community. The excessive and sometimes indiscriminate use of force, administrative detentions, deportations and collective punishments are among those actions by the occupying forces which are totally unacceptable.*

Violence has bred violence. The innocent have suffered and continue to suffer. Last Sunday a mother and her three small children were burned to death in a terrorist outrage in Jericho. Twelve days earlier a five-year-old child had been one of those killed by army bullets in Nablus. According to our latest figures, some 327 civilians have died in the current violence, 322 of them Palestinian and five of them Israeli. We call upon both sides to desist from violent methods, and we offer our sympathy to all the families afflicted.

The present is a time of hope as well as tragedy. There are new opportunities. It was for that reason that my delegation suggested to the authors of the draft resolution on which the Assembly has just voted that they include in it language expressing clearly the international community's rejection of atrocities and violence against civilians. Such a reference would, we believe, have helped clear the way for the negotiations for which we must hope, and would have enabled all concerned to back away from acts of this kind. Unhappily, our suggestion was not accepted. In our view the resolution in the form in which it

*Mr. Pejic (Yugoslavia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Sir Crispin Tickell, United Kingdom)

was adopted was deficient in that important respect. But we do not despair. We must look to the future in the hope that the deadlock may be broken, and that the men of violence, there as elsewhere, will be defeated.

Mr. FORTIER (Canada): Today's resolution embodies an essential principle which the Security Council has stated this year on three occasions and which our Secretary-General made a corner-stone of his report in January on the situation in the occupied territories. The Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War is a fundamental instrument of international law which must be applied in the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip. There should be no doubt that the international community is unanimous in proclaiming this principle. Canada, for its part, subscribes to it without the slightest reservation.

The Government of Canada solemnly expresses here its judgement and conviction that violations of the Convention by Israeli occupation authorities, including human rights abuses and settlements, are unacceptable. They are contrary to international law and damaging to the peace process and cannot continue.

Apart from the precise expression of our vote today, Canada hopes that this afternoon's deliberations will be clearly understood by the Israeli authorities as a universal appeal for respect for the Convention. We ask Israel to apply the Convention and, by so doing, express its willingness to encourage a climate for peaceful negotiations.

It is in order to safeguard prospects for peace that Canada has distanced itself by abstaining from a text that is not successful in shaking off partisan considerations. For example, the recent criminal attack against the civilian passengers of a bus shows that violence can originate from either party and that

(Mr. Fortier, Canada)

its destructive effects are momentous, in its consequences both for human beings and for the political situation. Canada abhors such acts, whatever their origin.

For the effectiveness of our Organization and to safeguard prospects for peace, which we all strive for, we must be vigilant not to break contact with either party. The international community's legitimate indignation at the violations of the human rights of the Palestinians must be expressed in a way that does not jeopardize all the efforts to encourage contacts and the beginning of negotiations in a framework enjoying the authoritative auspices of our Organization.

Mr. COSTELLO (Australia): I am making this statement in explanation of vote on behalf of New Zealand and Australia.

New Zealand and Australia voted in favour of the draft resolution on the uprising of the Palestinian people in order to express our deep concern at the continued unrest in the occupied territories and the increasing levels of violence, including loss of life, injury, destruction of property and arbitrary measures on the part of the occupying Power. We have strongly condemned certain practices, including the use of live ammunition against Palestinian demonstrators.

We deeply regret the suffering of the Palestinian people. We are concerned at the clear threats to regional security that this continuing situation of unrest brings with it. Nor is the suffering confined to the Arab population. The recent tragic incident in Jericho which led to the death of a number of innocent civilians highlights the dangers of escalating violence for Jew and Arab alike.

In this connection, we stress also that it is imperative that all parties renounce the use of terrorist tactics, and we particularly condemn the atrocities committed against innocent civilians.

(Mr. Costello, Australia)

Australia and New Zealand firmly believe that to ensure the safety and protection of the civilian population of the occupied territories Israel must accept the de jure applicability of the Geneva Convention to the territories and apply its provisions in full.

We therefore particularly welcome the fact that the resolution calls on Israel to abide immediately and scrupulously by the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the protection of civilian persons in time of war, of 12 August 1949, and to desist forthwith from its policies and practices that are in violation of the provisions of the Convention.

We fully endorse this demand, as the Security Council has done, and look to Israel to refrain from measures which are clearly causing growing frustration and antagonism. The extent and nature of some of Israel's responses in the occupied territories, including the deaths and beatings among the civilian population, have made even more difficult the task of achieving a just and lasting peace in the region. Our attitude to Israel's response to the unrest is firm and critical.

We stress that our commitment to the State of Israel is firm, but peace and justice for Israel will be found only when there is also peace and justice for the Palestinians. It is clear to us that the continuing violence in the occupied territories underlines the urgent need for a comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli dispute, based on Israel's right to exist within secure and recognized boundaries and the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination. Only courageous political leadership on the part of both the Israelis and the Palestinian leadership can bring this about. It is only within the context of a comprehensive settlement that we can see prospects for an end to the violence and upheaval that has caused such immeasurable suffering and loss of life in this part of the world.

Mr. KAGAMI (Japan): The deteriorating situation in the occupied Arab territories has been the focus of our attention since last December. Despite our concerted efforts the cycle of violence in those territories shows no sign of abating. In fact there are almost daily reports of additional casualties among the civilian population in the areas, with which we are deeply concerned. Japan has been urging the parties concerned to exercise restraint to avoid further casualties among the people living in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. However, Israel has continued to take excessive measures against the Palestinians, including the deportation of Palestinian civilians, and has only aggravated the situation.

Japan deplores in particular Israel's utter disregard of Security Council resolutions 605 (1987), 607 (1988) and 608 (1988) and its insistence that the Fourth Geneva Convention does not apply to the situation in the occupied territories. Japan calls upon Israel once again to accept the de jure applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention in the occupied territories and to protect the civilian population there.

Those are the considerations which have led us to vote in favour of draft resolution A/43/L.21. At the same time I feel compelled to mention the need for renewed efforts by the international community, particularly the United Nations, towards a political solution of the Palestinian problem, because underlying the current situation is the fact that a just, lasting and comprehensive peace has not been achieved in the Middle East. For far too long the Palestinian residents of the occupied territories have had to live under harsh political, economic and social conditions. Japan insists that peace in the area must be realized as soon as possible through prompt and complete implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and through the recognition of and respect for the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to self-determination in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

(Mr. Kagami, Japan)

All too often the destiny of peoples seems to be determined by violence. Violence, however, never settles problems. Violence, particularly against civilians, whether Palestinian or Israeli, must be rejected if a comprehensive peace in the area is ever to be attained.

Mr. PAOLILLO (Uruguay) (interpretation from Spanish): My delegation voted in favour of the draft resolution that has just been adopted because in our view the serious situation prevailing in the Palestinian territories should be the object of a decision by the General Assembly expressing the profound concern of the international community at the growing deterioration of that situation, while condemning acts of violence and violations of human rights which bring so much suffering and loss of life among the civilian populations in the region. However, we regret that the resolution has omitted references to factors that undoubtedly are part of the complex picture of the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories. The circumstance is such that in our view some of the provisions of the resolution lack the balance that would have been there had all the elements involved in the context within which the uprising has taken place been included. Moreover, the resolution is essentially condemnatory in nature and does not make recommendations or constructive appeals or proposals dealing with the true causes of the problem, which would encourage the parties to refrain from resorting to violence and, on the other hand, would promote the establishment of mechanisms conducive to the negotiated, definitive settlement of this problem, which is so fervently desired by all, on the basis of resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and other relevant resolutions of the Security Council.

Mr. RAMAKER (Netherlands): Earlier in the debate the position of the Twelve with regard to agenda item 77 was set out by the representative of Greece speaking on behalf of the twelve member States of the European Community.

(Mr. Ramaker, Netherlands)

Naturally, we fully subscribe to what he then said. The Netherlands delegation has, therefore, voted in favour of draft resolution A/43/L.21.

I have asked to speak, nevertheless, in order to place on record some observations on the text of the resolution just adopted. In the first place the Netherlands is of the opinion that this resolution does not deal in a balanced manner with all the relevant aspects of the conflict. We fail, therefore, to see how this resolution can contribute to the overall peace process. Furthermore, the Netherlands has always been of the opinion that the solution of the Middle East problem should be based on the principle of non-recourse to the use of force. Therefore, the Netherlands wants to make it clear that its vote in favour of the text just adopted can in no way be interpreted as an encouragement to or support for the use of violence.

Finally, I wish to put on record that the mentioning of Jerusalem in operative paragraph 1 of the resolution can only refer to the part of that city occupied by Israel since 1967, as is clearly stated in the other relevant paragraphs of the resolution.

Mr. CANETE (Paraguay) (interpretation from Spanish): My delegation voted in favour of the resolution just adopted by the General Assembly because in our view it reflects a disquieting reality regarding the occupied territories that is an obstacle to the settlement of this question. My delegation acts on the basis of principle, concerning the violation of the rights of the Palestinian people, but it takes into account also the rights and interests of the State of Israel.

Mr. DANUS (Chile) (interpretation from Spanish): My delegation voted in favour of this resolution although we consider that operative paragraph 1 is not appropriately balanced. In fairness, my delegation would have preferred that this paragraph had condemned all the acts of violence that have taken place in the occupied territories, regardless of their origin, and appealed to all the parties involved to refrain from resorting to such acts.

The PRESIDENT: I call on the representative of Egypt, who has asked to speak in exercise of the right of reply. I remind him that, in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. BADAWI (Egypt) (interpretation from Arabic): The General Assembly has met today in order to consider the situation in the occupied territories of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and has adopted by an overwhelming majority a resolution on the uprising. Egypt had the honour to be one of the sponsors of that resolution and, of course, voted in favour of it.

Some have spoken today on the assumption that they have a right to speak on behalf of Egypt and its people. I regret to say that they are mistaken and have been for a number of years.

(Mr. Badawi, Egypt)

The clear, firm position of Egypt is the need to seek a settlement in the Middle East seriously and effectively and to look to the future, not to hang on to outmoded slogans that are no use to anyone. Egypt calls for the convening of an international conference, which should: first, lead to the restoration of the inalienable, legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, especially their right to self-determination; secondly, ensure the withdrawal of Israel from all occupied Arab territories, whether in the West Bank, Gaza, Arab Jerusalem or the Syrian Golan Heights; and, thirdly, guarantee the right of all peoples and nations in the Middle East to live in peace in accordance with the principles of good-neighbourliness.

For the past 20 years Egypt has clearly condemned Israeli practices and actions in the occupied territories. Once again, we condemn all Israeli policies that impede a settlement and do not help to defuse the Middle East crisis.

The PRESIDENT: The Observer of the League of Arab States has asked to be allowed to make a statement in reply. I call on him in accordance with General Assembly resolution 477 (V), of 1 November 1950.

Mr. MARSOU (League of Arab States): I wish to comment on the statement of the representative of Israel. He spoke of the use of violence with a view to imposing conditions on Israel. I have never before seen such a reversal of roles. For the past 11 months, those taking part in the Palestinian uprising have refrained from violence of any kind. The violent coercion that the occupying Power has exercised is the only violence that has been used. It is aimed at disfranchising Palestinian people for ever and prohibiting the exercise of their rights. We have all seen how the mainstream of the Palestine uprising, which has been imbued with non-violence throughout the entire 11 months, has refrained from

(Mr. Maksoud, League of Arab States)

any violence as a matter of overriding principle, while Israel has to resort to violence day in and day out. Yet, when an incident - regrettable, unfortunate - occurred and its army was attacked as a legitimate target, as the army of an occupying Power, in south Lebanon, Israel's instant reflex was revenge, the wreaking of havoc on the Palestinian camps and the imposition of curfews. That is why I said in my statement that violence was inherent in the pattern of occupation, while violence was incidental and unfortunate in the Palestinian uprising.

Therefore, those in the Western world who abstained in the voting and tried to create a parallel between planned, deliberate violence by the occupying Power, which is a matter of policy, and the incidental, accidental, unfortunate and regrettable individual violence that has taken place, have, in effect, applied a double standard. For 11 months not a single planned, deliberate incident of violence has taken place in the course of the uprising.

My other point concerns the allegation of imbalance in the resolution.

Mr. Okun, the representative of the United States, stated:

"We believe direct negotiations ... offer the only realistic basis for achieving such a [legitimate political] settlement." (supra, p. 88)

If he wants direct negotiations as a means of solving problems and settling conflicts, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) is available to negotiate. But, as long as the PLO is circumvented and excluded from exercising its right to participate and negotiate, it cannot accept any kind of negotiations under the duress of occupation, because that would mean accepting and ratifying the conquests of Israel. We believe in negotiations as a means of achieving a legitimate outcome; the Arab States believe in negotiations; but we do not believe in being dictated to as a consequence of the continued occupation of Israel.

(Mr. Maksoud, League of Arab States)

This is why we support the idea of an international conference sponsored by the United Nations. I agree with the American representative that it should be properly structured. The PLO should represent the Palestinian people and, as recognized by the United States and as Secretary Shultz said in his speech on 12 September, such a conference should not rule out the right of the Palestinians to self-determination and to establish a Palestinian State. Those are the very political rights which are being targeted for destruction. The important thing is for the Palestinians to exercise their full national and political rights, in conditions of equality, in the Middle East region.

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will resume consideration of this item when it takes up the report of the Special Political Committee.

The meeting rose at 6.40 p.m.