



General Assembly

PROVISIONAL

A/43/PV.92
20 April 1989

ENGLISH

Forty-third session

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE NINETY-SECOND MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 19 April, 1989, at 10 a.m.

President:

Mr. PEJIC
(Vice-President)

(Yugoslavia)

- Question of Palestine [37] (continued)

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In the absence of the President, Mr. Pejic (Yugoslavia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.40 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 37 (continued)

QUESTION OF PALESTINE: LETTER FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF SAUDI ARABIA (A/43/1007)

The PRESIDENT: I have been requested by the President of the General Assembly, His Excellency Mr. Dante Caputo, to say that he very much regrets that, owing to prior obligations and the short notice on which the request for this important meeting of the General Assembly was submitted, he will be unable to preside over the Assembly at this time.

This morning the Assembly will resume its consideration of agenda item 37, "Question of Palestine".

Before calling upon the first speaker, I should like to remind representatives that, in accordance with the decision taken yesterday morning, the list of speakers in the debate will be closed today at 1 p.m. I therefore request those representatives who wish to participate in the debate to inscribe their names on the list as soon as possible.

I now call upon Her Excellency Mrs. Absa Claude Diallo of Senegal to make a statement in her capacity as Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

Mrs. DIALLO (Senegal), Chairman, Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (interpretation from French): It is a privilege for me to speak in the General Assembly as Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

Today the Assembly is meeting once again at the request of the members of the Group of Arab States to discuss the dangerous situation that prevails in the occupied Palestinian territories. That situation is deteriorating day by day

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because of the stepped-up repression being exercised by the Israeli forces against the Palestinians, who are resolutely pursuing their heroic resistance to the occupation, a resistance that is now entering into its sixteenth month.

Notwithstanding the indignant protests voiced by the international community, Israel, the occupying Power, continues to ignore the resolutions with regard to the occupied Palestinian territories that the Security Council has adopted since the beginning of the intifadah, in particular resolutions 605 (1987), 607 (1988) and 608 (1988), and the statement by the President of the Security Council of 26 August 1988. Moreover, Israel refuses to respect any of the resolutions adopted by the Security Council concerning Jerusalem, the unlawfulness of the Israeli settlements in the occupied territories and the deportation of Palestinian civilians, the applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, the violation of human rights and the right to return of the people displaced in 1967.

We note with regret that since the suspension of the forty-third session of the General Assembly - one that was characterized by many historic events, including, inter alia, the first anniversary of the intifadah, the proclamation of an independent Palestinian State, the peace initiative of His Excellency Chairman Yasser Arafat and the commitment by the vast majority of Member States to a peaceful and negotiated settlement - the repression in the occupied Palestinian territories has not lessened but has, on the contrary, become increasingly brutal, with a daily toll of dead and seriously wounded and of massive destruction.

I should like to submit to the Assembly a few details about the latest tragic events that have occurred in the occupied territories. These details have already been brought to the urgent attention of the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council in five letters addressed to them on behalf of the Committee

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on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People since the beginning of 1989.

On 5 January 1989 the Acting Chairman of the Committee indicated that December of 1988 was being referred to by members of the Israeli Parliament as "Black December". During the course of that month Israeli soldiers killed 31 Palestinians and wounded more than 400 others. In my letter of 25 January 1989 I pointed out that the Israeli Minister of Defence had announced "tough new measures" against Palestinians accused of throwing stones in the occupied territories. The measures included, inter alia, allowing a greater number of soldiers to fire on demonstrators and to seal or destroy homes. During the month of January 1989 more than 30 Palestinians, mostly young people, were shot and killed.

On 3 March I informed the Secretary-General that 22 Palestinians had been killed during the month of February, including 8 children under 15 years of age, and that more than 250 had been wounded. I also noted that unidentified explosive devices had killed or wounded a number of Palestinian children.

On 3 April I pointed out that in the prior month repression by Israeli armed forces had caused the death of at least 23 Palestinians, including a four-year-old child, and that more than 350 Palestinians had been wounded. In my last letter, dated 14 April, I drew the attention of the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council to the escalation of violence by the Israeli military as well as Israeli settlers.

In the course of a raid on 13 April against the village of Nahhalin, at least five Palestinians were killed and 25 others wounded by members of the Israeli border police, accompanied by settlers. That incident has aroused the serious concern of the international community and has led to statements of protest by the

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United Nations Secretary-General, the International Committee of the Red Cross and Amnesty International.

The New York Times of 18 April 1989 - yesterday - reported that six more Palestinians had been killed in a single day in the occupied territories. Those most recent victims bring to at least 560 the number of Palestinians killed by the Israeli army since the beginning of the intifadah.

On behalf of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, I wish to voice a vigorous protest against the escalation of blind oppression that Israel, the occupying Power, is inflicting upon the Palestinians in the occupied territories and, in particular, against the increasingly frequent participation of armed Israeli settlers in such repression. The Committee believes that the international community has a duty to redouble its efforts to guarantee the protection of the Palestinians subject to the occupation and to bring about Israel's withdrawal from occupied Palestinian territories in accordance with the provisions of the Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 12 August 1949 and the relevant resolutions of the United Nations.

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Palestinian People)

Finally, the Committee wishes once again to appeal urgently to all the parties concerned to accelerate the efforts to facilitate the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 43/176, of 15 December 1988. Indeed, that is the only practical and widely accepted framework for the establishment of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in that greatly troubled region of the world.

The PRESIDENT: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 3237 (XXIX), of 22 November 1974, and resolution 43/177, of 15 December 1988, I call on the Observer of Palestine.

Mr. TERZI (Palestine): It is really sad that the General Assembly should have to address itself to another case of criminal activity carried out in total violation of the norms of international law, and specifically of the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention. It is sad that the General Assembly should have to do this because another organ of the United Nations has not shouldered its full responsibility in this respect.

In any event, we are grateful to you, Mr. President, and the other members of the General Assembly for allowing this discussion to be reopened and for enabling us to consider this very grievous matter.

A five-column headline in The New York Times yesterday - 18 April 1989 - reads: "5 Palestinians Reported Killed by Israel in Second Highest Daily Toll of the Uprising". For a moment one might have thought that a five-column headline referred to something out of the ordinary. One would have thought that for the editors to give it such prominence the news would be either sensational or repugnant and abominable. But one would have to remember that a couple of days

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earlier, on 15 April 1989, the very same daily newspaper, The New York Times, had carried the following headline on its front page: "Israel Restricts Palestinians' Freedom of Worship".

So it is obvious that the news was significant, indeed alarming. Restricting freedom of worship, killing more and more people: these are not hourly or daily occurrences. It is not the same thing as reading the weather reports.

The same daily newspaper informs us that the number of Palestinians killed in the past five days has reached the figure of 16. It adds that in Gaza a 56-year-old Palestinian died from wounds sustained when he was beaten by Israeli soldiers who broke into the family's house and beat him on the neck and chest. Beating a 56-year-old man and causing his death: that is not only news; it is alarming and shocking.

One particular case seems to have drawn the attention of the International Committee of the Red Cross - and let me immediately express our appreciation to it for the information it has circulated and the position it has taken. Its report reads as follows:

"On 13 April, six Arab inhabitants of the village of Nahhalin, in the Israeli-occupied territories, were killed and about 30 others were wounded in the course of an operation by the Israeli armed forces. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) vigorously protests against this latest tragic incident, during which troops opened fire without discrimination and without restraint.

"For several months the ICRC has been extremely concerned by the increasingly frequent use of firearms and by acts of physical violence against defenceless civilians. In addition, the evacuation of the injured has been hampered, as well as the work of medical staff and hospitals in the occupied territories."

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Yesterday Amnesty International issued a statement in which it pointed out that "Israeli forces had killed over 400 Palestinians in the occupied territories since the intifadah began, in December 1987, by shootings and beatings and in tear-gas-related incidents. Dozens of the victims have been young, including babies and children of 3, 5 and 12 years of age."

Amnesty International said that

"a large number of reports it had received did not support the Israeli authorities' standard justification for most of the shooting, that their forces only opened fire when their lives were in danger".

It should be recalled that in January Amnesty International, in one of its summaries, stated that

"a pattern of human rights violations, including killings, beatings and unfair imprisonment continues in the Israeli-occupied territories 14 months after the beginning of the Palestinian uprising known as the intifadah. Hundreds of Palestinians have died as a result of army gunfire or the apparently deliberate misuse of tear gas" -

and I emphasize the words "deliberate misuse".

Preliminary research and investigation reveal that the Israeli army and border police took part in the crime against the town of Nahhalin. We should also remember that they were joined by members of the Israeli armed forces masquerading as civilian settlers and carrying machine guns. All this armed personnel arrived in Nahhalin just after midnight, hid in the town and took over an abandoned house near the mosque. This house was used as a sniping point during the massacre. The members of the Israeli armed forces opened fire straight into the houses of the people of the town.

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This raid cannot even be described as a raid in reprisal for acts committed by the people of Nahhalin. It was planned; it was provoked; it was executed in a bloody, criminal way.

We still remember that this same town of Nahhalin has been a target for other Israeli acts of State terrorism.

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On the night of 28-29 March 1974, 15 years ago, Nahhalin was attacked by Israeli forces. Fourteen Palestinian civilians were killed and 28 others were wounded. In that act of State terrorism 300 members of the Israeli armed forces conducted the massacre of those unarmed civilian residents of the town.

Nahhalin is only one place in the occupied Palestinian territory where the occupying power, Israel, is committing these acts of State terrorism. A 17-year-old boy was shot and killed in the Dheisheh refugee camp. He was Nasser Ibrahim-Al-Qassas. Another boy, 10-year-old Muhammad Suleiman Rahi, died after he bled to death from a bullet wound in the abdomen, and 13-year-old Rafudag Abu Lahan, was buried. She was killed instantly by a bullet to her head.

Those children, the hope for the future, have been denied the right to life. They have been denied all other rights. They have been denied the right to education as Israel imposes school closures, curfews and other brutal and arbitrary restrictions. The latest and most recent Israeli act is to prohibit even private tutoring on private premises. They simply plan to have a generation of illiterate and ignorant Palestinians. But I assure you that they will not succeed. This generation of young boys and girls is being compelled to exist in a large concentration - nay, elimination - camp known to the Israelis as the administered territories but known to the world as the occupied Palestinian territory.

The question here is not "What is to be done?", but "What are we to do?". What is the international community as represented here - and, more specifically, the Security Council, the organ entrusted with the task of maintaining international peace and security - to do? I hasten to add that we Palestinians declare that we have no grudge or complaint against the institution as such or against the membership. We know that the members of the Council under the prudent stewardship of most of its presidents have endeavoured with sincerity to do the

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least - namely, express an opinion or a position - but one particular permanent member has proved to be the obstacle and has succeeded in denying the other members the freedom to discharge their minimal obligation and issue a statement. It is this sign of obduracy and favouritism of the acts of state terrorism committed by Israel that has encouraged the occupying Power to persist in its policies and practices. It is the green light, the "go-ahead" signal that the Government of the United States, a permanent member of the Security Council, gave to Israel when it resorted to vetoing a very mild and watered-down draft resolution deploring Israel's violation of its international obligations under the Fourth Geneva Convention. Can one really presume that the United States acted in good faith but could not assess Israel's reaction, or that Israel misunderstood the intentions of the United States? Whatever the conjecture, the net result is borne out and manifested by the acts of Israel and the crimes against humanity committed by the Israeli armed forces.

We are told very often that any statement by the Council or any other organ should be balanced, but apparently the concept of balance is rather odd. How can one balance the legitimacy of the struggle of a people under foreign occupation with the crimes, oppression and iron-fist policies and practices of the occupying Power? Thus the word "balance" seems to be a misnomer here. We are proud that our people has resorted to the glorious intifadah, which was sparked in December 1987 and is still growing stronger. We are reminded of a similar intifadah, the glorious Warsaw Ghetto uprising, and we recall that had that uprising begun a few years earlier against the forces of nazism and Nazi occupation the lives of millions of innocent victims could have been spared. So to the fallen heroes of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising and the heroes of the Ghetto of the occupied Palestinian territory we raise our hats and salute them and honour their memory.

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The occupying Power is not satisfied merely with eliminating human beings. Only the day before yesterday, on 17 April 1989, almost 1,000 olive trees in Surif, near Hebron, were uprooted by Israeli bulldozers. Of course this is only one aspect of the economic brutalization of our people, but it is more significant. Is not the olive branch the symbol of peace? Does Israel want to send a message, "No to peace", by uprooting those olive trees? On 15 November 1988 the Palestine National Council concluded its meetings and adopted a peace plan which was presented in the following statement of President Yasser Arafat before the General Assembly on 13 December 1988:

"... in my capacity as Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) Executive Committee, which at present shoulders the functions of the provisional government of the State of Palestine, I present the following Palestinian peace initiative:

First, that a serious effort be made to convene, under the supervision of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the preparatory committee of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East - in accordance with the initiative of President Gorbachev and President Mitterrand, which President Mitterrand presented to the Assembly towards the end of last September and was supported by many States, in order to pave the way for convening of the International Conference, which commands universal support, with the exception of the Government of Israel;

Secondly, on the basis of our belief in international legitimacy and the vital role of the United Nations that actions be undertaken to place our occupied Palestinian land under temporary United Nations supervision, and that international forces be deployed there to protect our people and at the same time supervise the withdrawal of the Israeli forces from our country;

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Thirdly, that the PLO will work for the achievement of a comprehensive settlement among the parties concerned in the Arab-Israeli conflict, including the State of Palestine, Israel and the other neighbouring States, within the framework of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), so as to guarantee equality and the balance of interests, especially our people's rights to freedom and national independence, and respect for the right of all the parties to the conflict to exist in peace and security.

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"If those principles are endorsed at the International Conference we shall have come a long way towards a just solution, and that will make it possible to reach agreement on all security and peace arrangements."

(A/43/PV.78, pp. 33-36)

The endeavours by the Palestinian people for peace and a political solution conducive to peace were reiterated in the communiqué that was issued early this month by our Central Council and circulated as a document of the General Assembly. What was the response of the other principal party, the aggressor Israel? It is clear from its actions - and let us not be fooled by the demagoguery of Israel: Let us listen to what Prime Minister Shamir said on Israeli television the day before yesterday:

"Palestinian elected representatives have strayed from the assigned course and sought to set up a Palestinian State. We" - that is, Israel - "will not permit them to do so, despite the fact that they have been elected".

That is the message Prime Minister Shamir is sending the world about his so-called peace efforts. Yet, we shall continue in our endeavours; we shall continue in our struggle. Our intifadah is progressing; it is irreversible, notwithstanding the price. But there is always a price to be paid for freedom.

Let us not be fooled or dragged away from the course of action that the General Assembly almost unanimously adopted in its resolution 43/176. Let us express the hope that at least one of the two negative votes cast on 15 December 1988 will be reconsidered for the sake of peace. As our Central Council declared in its statement of 3 April:

"The Central Council took note of the facts and details of the United States-Palestinian dialogue and welcomed the initiation, continuation and significance of this dialogue. At the same time, it stressed the political,

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international and moral responsibility of the United States of America to put a halt to the Israeli occupation and Palestinian suffering. It also stressed the positive and major role which the new Administration has begun to play with a view to the establishment of a just and comprehensive peace in the region and looks forward to its maintenance of a balanced and impartial position on the conflict, eschewing the use of the veto in Israel's favour".

(A/44/220, annex, p. 3)

That is the message of the Palestinian people to the international community and specifically to those who pushed the red button and voted against the prospects for peace. Let us hope that they will no longer be an obstacle but will let justice and peace have a chance.

Mr. SHIHABI (Saudi Arabia) (interpretation from Arabic): It gives me pleasure in my capacity as Chairman of the Arab Group and Chairman of the Islamic group to thank you, Mr. President, for your speedy action to reconvene this session, and to thank members for their positive response and their support.

We wish there were no need to discuss the problem of Palestine; we wish the matter had been resolved, or that it were on the path to a just solution and total stability so that the area could enjoy the tranquillity and co-operation enjoyed by other regions in the world. We say this as we express our happiness that the problem of Namibia has entered the final stages of solution.

The conditions in Palestine are not what we would hope for. The situation there is going from bad to worse in spite of all the great concessions and hard sacrifices the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) has made in order to arrive at a solution that would bring stability to the country and calm to the area, and on the basis of which future generations might look forward to a stable and calm future.

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But Zionism is demonstrating that it wants otherwise. It is hiding something and is working to jeopardize the possibility of a solution. This is a test for the international community.

In Palestine today, the Arab inhabitants, the legitimate owners of the country, are subjected to massacres. One such massacre became public last week: Nahhalin, a peaceful Arab village, was attacked at dawn by Israeli soldiers firing indiscriminately. They killed women, men, elderly people, youths and children, adding to the ever-growing list of the murdered and wounded throughout the country.

In Palestine today, the Israeli authorities lay siege on places of worship. They attack worshippers and prevent them from exercising their duties. Last Friday, they prevented worshippers from reaching the Al-Aqsa mosque, the first of the two Holy Kibblas and the third of the Holy mosques, and one of the holiest spots on Earth for Muslims; that was an unforgivable crime, a crime that will be recorded in the annals of this dark era in the region's history. It was an arrogant denial of all human values.

Where do we go from here? What are the Zionist authorities aiming for? Do they think they can exterminate a people in its own country, on the land of its fathers and forefathers? Let us face facts: The Palestinians are on their own land, on the land of their ancestors. Does Zionism think it can annihilate them? If so, it is ignorant and has lost its way. The whole Arab nation stands with the Arabs in Palestine. The whole Islamic nation stands with them in their jihad.

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Every reasonable person in the world today - including reasonable Jews - acknowledges the legitimacy and soundness of the Palestinian people's stand. The situation in Palestine is deteriorating day after day, and I wonder what direction the Zionist authorities are planning to take from here.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, under the leadership of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Fahd bin Abdul Aziz, has proclaimed its stand clearly and affirmed its full support for the total restoration of Palestinian rights and its backing for all the present constructive efforts. It is committed, along with its Arab and Islamic sister States, to a steadfast position that will safeguard Arab and Muslim rights and bring security and stability to the country. If Israel denies those rights, rejects security and undermines stability, the international community, through the United Nations, shoulders a great responsibility for what is taking place in Palestine today, because the community undertook the responsibility of partitioning Palestine and establishing a Jewish State on part of its territory 41 years ago. And because the United Nations and its Member States also shoulder the responsibility for the Geneva Conventions, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and, in a more comprehensive manner, the Charter of the United Nations itself, it is the duty of the United Nations to ensure compliance with these instruments and the application of what is above the minimum level of human and moral standards any member of the community of nations is deemed to comply with in order to qualify to be such a member.

There is nothing new in what we are saying. Since 1967, the people and the land of the occupied Arab territories have been subjected to the worst measures of oppression, terror, destruction and starvation by the Israeli authorities and their soldiers and armed settlers, after they occupied the first part of Palestine in

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1948, on which Israel was established. Twenty-two years have elapsed since 1967 and the crimes of murder, torture and destruction are being committed by the Israeli authorities against the Arab people under the eyes and within earshot of the international community, which stands in witness, while the Palestinian people suffer and wait, and Zionism takes as a green light the support it gets from some and the silence it detects from others, not caring for the rest, while it challenges the international community.

This long night has to come to an end. The Palestinian people are not a flock of sheep to be driven to the slaughterhouses by their executioners. Israel has been ignorant, and those who support it do not understand that the Arab people in Palestine have a limited capacity for patience and an unlimited capacity for struggle and resistance, until God Almighty sees that the right is realized and falsehood is defeated. The entire people has risen up - men, women, children, the elderly and youths - tearing off the umbrella of oppression and darkness. For 16 months we have been living daily with the Palestinian intifadah, the peaceful Palestinian intifadah - and it is peaceful still, in spite of the brutality of the Israeli authorities and their crimes that thwart peace and undermine security. Because we know, and members know, what the situation would be if the Palestinians resorted to the same tools of violence the Zionists are using. It is a peaceful uprising so far, and the result is that, at the hands of the Israeli Army, hundreds of Palestinians have been killed, thousands wounded and tens of thousands of others placed under arrest - let alone the houses destroyed, lands usurped and belongings stolen; let alone the universities shut down, schools closed and means of livelihood obstructed. In which direction are the Israeli authorities moving? What is their fate? Does Zionism imagine that it can eliminate the Arab people in Palestine in the midst of a vast ocean of hundreds of millions of Arabs and Muslims committed to them?

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We have said that the intifadah is a loud outcry to those who would not hear. It is a call for awareness and consciousness to solve the problem of Palestine in a manner that preserves the Arab rights; and no solution can be otherwise. Please listen to it and do not reject it, otherwise, there will be consequences for the oppressor.

The Zionist authorities were quick to answer the call: they increased the violence and multiplied the number of those killed and wounded and continued to create concentration camps and Zionist settlements on Arab land, while the friends of Israel either listened and were incapable of acting, or listened and gave some advice - which Israel does not accept, having been accustomed to getting what it wants - while others stand by worried, realizing the seriousness of what Israel is doing and the consequences which could result. The Israeli authorities have closed their ears to the roar of the Arab voice and the rumble of events, believing, as they have said, that their reign of terror inside and their imposition of a black-out on the news media outside is the satisfactory answer.

What shall we do here? Where do members stand on what is taking place today? Days are passing, wrought with events.

The United Nations should shoulder its responsibilities; we are part of it and members are all part of it.

All are gathered here today in urgent meeting, in the hope that we can take a stand that can make those amongst the Zionist authorities who cannot hear, and who refuse to listen, do so - a stand that may be appreciated by those who support Israel and remain silent. The international community rejects these crimes in the strongest possible sense; it recognizes the right of the legitimate owners and acknowledges its responsibility for the sanctity and security of the Palestinian rights to which it should be committed. The reins are in the hands of the

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Palestinian people today. This is a fact that we all know today. Zionism is opposing the march of history. It may finally see reason, should it feel that world public opinion, especially that of its friends, realizes the false path it persists in following and the risk it is taking.

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In the name of the Arab Group and the Islamic Group I call upon representatives to appreciate that the gravity of what is taking place in Palestine necessitates action by the United Nations, in particular the General Assembly and the Security Council, to the same level of responsibility. This is the occasion for the United Nations to play its role towards peace and security - the peace and security for which the Palestinian people is calling from a position of strong adherence to its full rights, based on the principle of respect for others' rights. The road to peace is being blocked by Israel every day. We have to make peace the only possibility for the future and the only alternative to the present conflict which will never be concluded in the way Israel wants if it persists on its present course.

I conclude this statement by greeting the State of Palestine with a call to the Palestinian people that the world supports its jihad and applauds its heroism. May God's peace and blessings be on the souls of the martyrs. Let us in the United Nations march ahead of events and not run after them.

Mr. GHEZAL (Tunisia) (interpretation from Arabic): The General Assembly is meeting again today to discuss the item "Question of Palestine" in the light of the dangerous situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, which is deteriorating day by day because of the Israeli occupation forces' increased repression of the unarmed Palestinians. As stated by the Permanent Representative of Saudi Arabia and by the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, the Permanent Representative of Senegal, as well as by the representative of the Palestine Observer Mission, the bloody repressive measures have recently been stepped up to such a serious extent that the international community represented by the General Assembly and the Security Council can no longer remain silent and ignore its historical

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responsibilities, particularly with regard to the distress of the Palestinian people.

The Israeli occupying forces have desperately resorted to all forms of barbaric repression, including mass arrests and outright massacres. They have beaten people, broken their bones, destroyed homes and used all types of murderous weapons - all this not against a regular army or armed groups but against women and children, young people armed only with the stone of David of the Holy Land, with their absolute refusal to permit this foreign occupation to continue, and with faith in their right to live in freedom and dignity on their own land. Among the most striking events of this senseless campaign is the Israeli occupying forces' premeditated massacre of the inhabitants of the village of Nahhalin last Thursday morning right after their hour of prayer. In a way, that massacre recalls to mind the satanic plan of the Israeli forces during the Sabra and Shatila massacres. This past Monday, six Palestinians were killed and many others were wounded as the Palestinian people was celebrating the first anniversary of the atrocious murder of the freedom fighter Abu Jihad Khalil al-Wazir at the hands of the Israeli forces.

As will be recalled, that murder was condemned by the Security Council. Yet Israeli prisons and detention camps still hold thousands upon thousands of Palestinians, whose health and nutrition have seriously deteriorated. So has their psychological condition as they are subjected to unrelenting torture. In addition, the Israeli occupying forces have once again imposed curfews in many towns and cities; they have arrested hundreds of people and barred journalists in an effort to complete the isolation of the occupied Arab territories from the rest of the world. What is worse and even more serious is that those forces reject human values and ignore international conventions by preventing Muslims from praying

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on Fridays in the Al-Aqsa Mosque. This reveals their tacit desire to isolate Muslims from the Holy Places of Jerusalem.

In view of the seriously deteriorating situation in the occupied Palestinian territories we appeal to the international community to take the measures necessary to put an end to the arrogance of the Israeli occupying forces and their contempt for human values, laws and international regulations.

The glorious intifadah - the generation of stone-throwers - is no passing fancy: it is the uprising of an entire people. It expresses their absolute irrevocable refusal to allow the continuation of occupation and repression. The intifadah will continue undaunted. It will end only when the occupation has ended and when the legitimate, inalienable rights of the Palestinian people are restored. Israel must learn from the bitter experience of the Jewish people the need for discussion. Israel must also learn from the past experience of colonialism and occupation that it cannot thwart the determination of a people to attain freedom and the full measure of human rights.

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All colonialism must be ended, whatever its strength and intransigence. Any colonialist who believes that he can win where others have failed is mistaken, and Israeli colonialism will be no exception.

The Palestinian people will continue to fight to gain its freedom, achieve self-determination and build its own independent State on its territory. However, in order to bring a just and lasting solution to its problem and the Arab-Israeli conflict as a whole, it has frequently welcomed sincere peace initiatives. It has also welcomed every effort and sincere good offices with a view to breaking the impasse on the Palestinian question we have witnessed for many years.

The decision taken by the Palestine National Council at its session held last November in Algiers clearly reflects the Palestinian people's commitment to peace. It also reflects its desire for such international legitimacy and respect as are contained in General Assembly and Security Council resolutions. The well-known statement by the Palestinian leader, Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization, in the debate in Geneva before the General Assembly on the question of Palestine last December, reaffirmed the Palestinian leaders' commitment to finding a solution based on fairness and equity. Thus, the Palestinian side has displayed moderation, flexibility and its sincere desire to seek peace to such an extent that even Israel's information media have recognized the fact.

While the world as a whole feels that such an attitude is necessary, we must now seize the opportunity in order to find a speedy solution to the Palestinian problem. However, Israel is at the same time persisting in its arrogance, intransigence, and rigid attitude of refusal. It is calling the sincerity of the Palestinians into question and seeking to hinder the genuine peace efforts by proposing unrealistic solutions. Israel has also resorted to repression of

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Palestinian inhabitants. But, then, has Israel ever been sincere? Has it ever shown sincerity?

The Palestinian leaders, on the other hand, have proved their sincere desire for peace, as Israel itself and its friends have recognized. Today, the world as a whole knows that it is Israel that refuses to accept just and peaceful solutions, Israel that prefers to continue its occupation of others' land in order to maintain the status quo. Israel will reap only what it has sown. If it wants peace and justice, it can have them; if, on the other hand, it persists in its occupation of the territory of the Palestinian people, it will end up with neither land nor peace.

In adopting resolution 43/176 by an overwhelming majority the General Assembly has taken an historical path paving the way to a peaceful, valid solution. The PLO welcomed that resolution and called for its implementation, in keeping with its stance in favour of international law. We ask the international community, and the Security Council in particular, to assume its full responsibility and to consider without delay measures to enable the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East.

At present, the main task of the international community is to ensure the protection of the Palestinians, who are unarmed, who are struggling under the yoke of colonialism and who are suffering its blind oppression. That is the first step on the path towards a peaceful and just settlement, in accordance with the report of the Secretary-General contained in document S/19443 of 21 January 1988.

Mr. BADAWI (Egypt) (interpretation from Arabic): Reports of bloody confrontations in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip between the occupation forces and the unarmed Palestinian population of these territories continue to come in. The violence of their details are shocking to all people of conscience and humanitarians. Regrettably, the situation is not new to our part of the world.

(Mr. Badawi, Egypt)

The intifadah of the Palestinian people has entered its seventeenth month. Hardly a day passes without innocent victims falling under the bullets or the clubs of the occupiers. Nevertheless, the Palestinians' rejection of the occupation remains as brave and as strong as it was at the outset. Indeed, they have clearly become all the more determined to restore their right to self-determination.

My country has always firmly maintained that this tragedy persists for no other reason than Israel's continued illegal occupation of those territories and its use of force to perpetuate the occupation and to deny the legitimate owners of the land their legitimate political rights. Israel has striven to use force to impose a fait accompli that runs counter to all laws and is rejected by the international community as a whole. Yet, the recent escalation of oppression by the occupation forces has reached a new level of brutality that has not been witnessed in the region for years. It calls to mind certain events that happened years ago in other Palestinian villages.

The occupation forces were not satisfied with murders and beatings, including children, women and the elderly. They proceeded to impose restrictions on the freedom of the population to exercise its religious rights and on its free access to places of worship. They continued to desecrate the Holy Places. This has pained and horrified the followers of all religions and all people of good conscience. It is a sad paradox that such actions should coincide with the religious festivities of both Muslims and Christians, thus making the shock all the stronger and the challenges all the greater.

(Mr. Badawi, Egypt)

The Government and the people of Egypt feel the suffering and pain of our Palestinian brothers. We are saddened by every life lost and every drop of blood shed. Our hearts bleed for the suffering of the innocent children under occupation.

The events of recent months have borne out our assessment: it has become clear that the intifadah cannot be stopped by force. The only way to deal with the situation and to move the whole region towards a better future lies in dialogue between the peoples and the States of the region, in negotiations for the establishment of a just and lasting peace. We continue to hope that the moderate forces in Israel will move towards the adoption of a negotiated settlement of this unacceptable situation. We continue to believe that the first step in that direction is the Israeli Government's initiation of dialogue with the Palestinian people. We believe that such dialogue is the only practical way of dealing with the bloodshed and ending the region's instability.

We maintain that the elements of a solution to the tragedy of the occupied territories are the following:

First, talks between the parties must be initiated in order to arrive at a comprehensive political settlement, the aim of which should be to enable the people of the region to exercise their rights to self-determination and to live in good-neighbourliness within internationally recognized boundaries. Such talks should take place under the aegis of the United Nations and in an appropriate framework accepted by the parties and supported by the international community. The international community has accepted the international conference as such a framework.

Secondly, Israel must take the first step in that direction by opening channels of communication with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) or its representatives in response to the numerous positive political initiatives taken by

(Mr. Badawi, Egypt)

the PLO in recent months, given the fact that the PLO, in keeping with the wish of the Palestinian people and as recognized by the international community, is the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

Thirdly, the economic and political stability of the region cannot be secured without an end to the illegal occupation of the West Bank, Gaza and the Golan Heights. The occupation constitutes the major cause of the current instability. Pending the achievement of that goal, Israel, as the occupying Power, must observe its obligations under the relevant international agreements.

Most importantly, Israel must abandon its obsolete ideas and doctrines. It must try to deal with the realities of the situation in a manner consistent with its expressed desire for the establishment of peace based upon justice.

The events of recent days have given rise to much anxiety as to the existence of good will to achieve movement towards a final political settlement. It is a source of regret to us that the Middle East conflict has not joined the ranks of other regional conflicts that have shown signs of abatement in recent months. Our regret is all the greater in view of what is taking place. We hope that those events have not reversed progress in the movement towards the solution of the conflict at a time when we are looking forward to the future.

Our pain is great, yet hope is greater. Our hope is that reason, logic and a just, forward-looking humane outlook will prevail in the interests of everyone - the Israelis, the Palestinians, and all the other peoples of the region.

Mr. AL-MASRI (Syrian Arab Republic) (interpretation from Arabic): In the early morning of Thursday, 13 April, an Israeli terrorist group called the Border Police committed a heinous crime against the peaceful inhabitants of the village of Nahhalin who were in their homes preparing to begin their fast. As members know, this is the Holy Month of Ramadan, when Muslims fast. The carnage resulted in the

(Mr. Al-Masri, Syrian Arab Republic)

deaths of seven Palestinians and the wounding of more than 50 more. The Israeli terrorist groups prevented emergency vehicles from reaching the village in order to transport the wounded. One of the doctors who witnessed the massacre mentioned that these elements closed all access to the village and opened fire on its inhabitants.

That outrageous crime is not an isolated or exceptional event. It is a link in the chain of Israeli Zionist practices against the Arabs in the occupied territories. Terrorism has been and will remain one of the basic elements in Zionist political thinking, which makes of violence a primary tool in its policy against the inhabitants of the occupied Arab territories as a way of forcing them to leave their homeland, their homes and their property or of eliminating them physically.

The Nahhalin massacre brings to mind other massacres committed by Zionism against the inhabitants of Deir Yassin, Qibya and Kafr Qasem as well as the village of Nahhalin itself that had witnessed a similar massacre in the past.

The massacre was followed by acts of murder when Muslims were prevented from entering the Al-Aqsa Mosque to worship. In its issue of 17 April, The New York Times reported that Israeli soldiers killed three Palestinians, among them a ten-year-old child, and wounded 12 others, when these citizens were expressing their outrage and protest on the occasion of the first anniversary of the assassination by armed Israeli terrorists of the Palestinian leader Abu Jihad in his home in Tunisia.

Such acts confirm the Israeli persistence in killing and persecuting the inhabitants of the occupied Arab territories. These daily practices, which have been stepped up against the inhabitants of the occupied Arab territories, should

(Mr. Al-Masri, Syrian Arab
Republic)

stir the international community to taking all effective measures to provide adequate protection to the civilian population in the occupied Arab territories and to demand the complete, immediate and unconditional withdrawal of the Israeli forces from all those territories, in order to enable the Palestinian Arab people to realize its inalienable national rights and to establish its independent State on its own soil.

(Mr. Al-Masri, Syrian Arab
Republic)

April marks the seventeenth month of the intifadah by the Arab Palestinian people in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. This uprising, which in actual fact is a revolution against Israeli occupation, has shown the whole world that it cannot be stopped, no matter what attempts are made by certain parties to stop it. This revolution has started; it will continue; it will escalate. The revolution has already confirmed the deep belief that there can be no turning back until the Israeli occupation ends and Palestinian independence and sovereignty on Palestinian territory have been achieved. This real revolution, in all its dimensions and with all its objectives, has already imposed a new local and international fait accompli. Those who believe that it is a passing phenomenon to which a stop can be put one way or the other may have a mistaken understanding of its nature and objectives and, indeed, of the movement and development of history.

Today, the revolution is more determined than ever before to continue, more firm and more capable of facing up to occupation and its terrorist practices. It will continue despite the measures of oppression and revenge taken by the Israeli occupation authorities in an attempt to crush it. This revolution is more determined than ever before to face up to all attempts to make concessions to Israel at the expense of the interests of the revolution and the Arab nation.

The continued Israeli occupation of the Arab territories is a continued act of aggression in terms of the United Nations Charter and the principles of international law. The situation is made even more serious by the fact that the occupation has become settler colonialism and that Israeli settlers are participating in campaigns of oppression and indeed physical elimination of the people of the occupied territories. Israel seeks to carry out an expansionist settler-colonialist programme in the Arab territories. It makes no secret of that

(Mr. Al-Masri, Syrian Arab Republic)

fact. It puts that programme into effect by refusing to withdraw from the territories and establishing hundreds of settlements there, by annexing Arab Jerusalem and the Syrian Arab Golan and by including southern Lebanon in this settler expansionist programme.

All that proves the misjudgement of some of those who believe that Israel seeks peace. Israel in fact wants these territories without their population. Israel wants the land, and indeed more land, to settle even more immigrants thereon and in that way to realize the dream of "Greater Israel, from the Euphrates to the Nile". In order to implement this settler expansionist programme, Israel annexed the Syrian Arab Golan and occupied southern Lebanon and made it a so-called security zone. It has committed acts of carnage against the people of the occupied Arab territories. It has demolished their homes and forced them to leave. It has confiscated their land and their property. It refuses to withdraw from the occupied Arab territories. It rejects the establishment of a Palestinian State and prevents the Palestinian people from exercising their national, inalienable rights.

After all that, is there anyone who can speak with any conviction about Israel's desire for peace? To Israel, peace means Arab surrender to its expansionist plans and the imposition of a fait accompli on the Arabs. That is why Israel rejects the idea of the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East. That is why it has time and again rejected the idea of withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories.

Peace is composed of many elements. Foremost among them is Israel's total, immediate, unconditional withdrawal from all the occupied territories and the exercise by the Arab Palestinian people of their national, inalienable rights,

(Mr. Al-Masri, Syrian Arab Republic)

including the right to self-determination and the establishment of their independent, sovereign State on their national soil. The appropriate framework for the achievement of a genuine and just peace is an international conference held under the auspices of the United Nations and with the participation of all the parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization and the permanent members of the Security Council.

The continued deterioration in the situation in the occupied Arab territories and the continued inability of the international community to take measures to deter Israel - including the imposition on it of comprehensive and mandatory sanctions - will definitely bring about a further worsening of the situation, thereby endangering peace and security in the region and the world.

The revolution of the Arab Palestinian people and the heroic resistance of our people in the Syrian Arab Golan and southern Lebanon will continue no matter what brutal and barbaric acts of oppression are committed by the Israeli occupation authorities. This revolution and this resistance will not stop no matter how great the sacrifices that must be made. Nothing will stand between the Arab people and the achievement of their objective: the liberation of Arab land from Israeli occupation.

Mr. BEIN (Israel): This precedented manipulation of the General Assembly by the Arab Group to convene once again for a pointless and unproductive debate against Israel does not lend dignity to the United Nations or to its objectives.

One of the main reasons cited for this request by the Arab Group, as we have heard here today, is based on a tragic and regrettable incident that occurred in the village of Nahhalin on 13 April 1989. The facts surrounding this incident are currently being investigated by the appropriate Israeli authorities, which have yet to submit their official findings.

(Mr. Bein, Israel)

We find it wholly consonant with the hypocritical rules of the game, as they are applied to Israel in this body, to note that not even a meagre attempt has been made to ascertain the actual facts of this incident in their entirety prior to action being taken here. Whenever a debate in the General Assembly focuses on Israel, its initiators do not want to be confused by the facts or by the reality of the situation as a whole. Pragmatic and viable solutions will not be reached by losing a sense of proportion but rather by finding it.

Furthermore, this exercise is another example of the selective conscience of this Organization. The General Assembly sees fit to convene and discuss an incident whose basic facts remain unclear, while 10,000 Syrian shells rain down daily on Beirut. More than 220 civilians have been killed and hundreds more wounded in the past month alone as Syrian shells are fired indiscriminately upon Lebanese targets, be they schools, diplomatic residences, apartment buildings or hospitals. The General Assembly maintains its resounding silence, much as it has remained silent throughout a long line of tragic incidents all over the world. Conflicts in which Israel is not involved consistently earn the profound indifference of this Organization.

Many States involved in regional conflicts have recognized the futility of violence and bloodshed and have redirected their efforts to dialogue, negotiations and peaceful solutions.

Israel believes that a viable and ongoing political process is the only path that will lead to a solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict and to peace. Violence and riots are not the solution but are the very essence of the problem. Israel wants the violence to cease and the political process to begin.

Accordingly, on 6 April 1989, Prime Minister Shamir proposed a four-point peace initiative relating to all aspects of the Arab-Israeli conflict. He stated the following:

(Mr. Bein, Israel)

First,

"We propose an effort to make the existing peace between Israel and Egypt, based on the Camp David Accords, a corner-stone for expanding peace in the region. We call upon the three signatories of the Camp David Accords, on this tenth anniversary of the Treaty of Peace, to reaffirm in deed their dedication to the Accords."

Secondly,

"We call upon the United States and Egypt to make it clear to the Arab Governments that they must abandon their hostility and belligerency towards Israel. They must replace political warfare and economic boycotts with negotiations and co-operation."

Thirdly,

"We call for a multinational effort, under the leadership of the United States and with substantial Israeli participation, to finally solve the Arab refugee problem, perpetuated by Arab Governments, while Israel has absorbed hundreds of thousands of Jewish refugees from Arab countries. All these refugees should have decent housing and live in dignity. This process does not have to await a political solution or to substitute for it."

Fourthly,

"In order to launch a political negotiating process, we propose free democratic elections, free from an atmosphere of PLO violence, terror and intimidation, among the Palestinian Arabs of Judea, Samaria and Gaza. The purpose of the elections is to produce a delegation to negotiate an interim period of a self-governing administration. The shape of modalities and participation in the elections will have to be discussed. The interim phase

(Mr. Bein, Israel)

is to provide a vital test of coexistence and co-operation. It will be followed by negotiations for a permanent agreement. All proposed options will be examined during these negotiations."

Those are Israel's proposals. Israel believes that the status quo is neither desirable nor satisfactory. We do not want to see it continued. Peace is Israel's objective. It is not Israel, and never was Israel, that needs to be convinced of the vital necessity of peace. If the sides to the conflict make a determined and sincere effort to bring it about, peace can and will be achieved.

Mr. OUDOVENKO (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) (interpretation from Russian): In the last few days the newspapers have been full of increasingly disturbing news about events in the occupied Palestinian territories.

The facts available to the United Nations have been referred to here by the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, Mrs. Diallo, and the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations, Mr. Terzi.

They show that as a result of this latest escalation of repression and violence by the Israeli occupying forces against innocent civilians, leading to the death of a large number of Palestinians, an extremely serious and explosive situation has emerged in the occupied territories, requiring urgent action by the international community. We are very indignant at the repression and murder of Palestinians in the village of Nahhalin in particular.

All of this has urgently required an emergency resumption of our discussion of the question of Palestine in the General Assembly and the taking of an appropriate decision. Of late, this has been an ongoing item for many United Nations bodies. As a member of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the

(Mr. Oudovenko, USSR)

Palestinian People, our delegation wishes to refer to the many appeals that Committee has made through its Chairman to the Secretary-General concerning the dire situation in the occupied Palestinian territories caused by the increasingly ruthless steps taken by Israel to suppress the Palestinian uprising, the intifadah.

(Mr. Oudovenko, Ukrainian SSR)

In view of the gravity of these events, the Committee firmly protested the continuing repression by the occupying Power, which has violated the Fourth Geneva Convention, international human rights instruments and relevant resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly.

That policy and those practices continue to prevent the Palestinian people from exercising its inalienable national rights in keeping with the principles of the United Nations Charter, and have created serious obstacles to international efforts to achieve a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. The Committee called upon the Secretary-General to do his utmost to ensure the safety and protection of Palestinian civilians under occupation and to step up his efforts to convene an international conference on peace in the Middle East in accordance with resolution 43/176.

Everyone now recognizes that the situation in the Middle East has recently changed so much that an international solution to the Palestinian problem is possible and realistic. True, there are difficulties. Of course, there are aspects of the Israeli position that now constitute the main obstacle. But since this Gordian knot must be untied in the interest of all the States of the region, including the Arabs, Israel and, naturally, the Palestinian people; since we must resolve the question of the return of the land, and since the necessary conditions are now in place with our experience of resolving other regional conflicts, I believe the international community has every chance of resolving this vexed, age-old conflict.

We pay a special tribute in this connection to the peaceful Palestinian uprising and the realistic, constructive position of the PLO leaders. Having recognized Security Council resolution 242 (1967), reaffirming its readiness for dialogue with Israel and having condemned terrorism in all its forms and

(Mr. Oudovenko, Ukrainian SSR)

manifestations, the PLO has shown itself an authoritative and serious partner in peace talks. Neither Israel nor anyone else now has the least pretext for rejecting participation by that organization, which represents the Palestinian people, in the preparation and work of an international conference on the Middle East.

Unfortunately, the statement just made by the representative of Israel shows that his country refuses to heed the international community's appeal to convene such a conference. Throughout virtually his entire statement, he circumvented the issue. We renew our appeal to the Government of Israel to review its negative position and join international efforts to reach a comprehensive solution of the Middle East conflict, the core of which is the question of Palestine.

A broad consensus has emerged on the need to convene that conference. The conference is firmly advocated by all the Arab countries parties to the conflict; there is active support from Western Europe, which recognizes the direct link between its security and the current situation in the Middle East; the notion of a conference is shared by all permanent members of the Security Council.

The priority now is active preparations for the international conference. We need to deploy the machinery of the Security Council, inter alia to consider the question at special meetings at the level of Foreign Ministers; activate consultations among the five permanent members of the Council, which in contact with the Secretary-General and the parties to the conflict should act as the preparatory body for the conference; and give full rein to the peace-making potential of the United Nations to arrive at other mutually-acceptable flexible ways to bring about constructive co-operation among all the parties towards a settlement. We should request the Secretary-General to appoint a special representative on the Middle East from among candidates acceptable to all.

(Mr. Oudovenko, Ukrainian SSR)

All the preparatory work could be carried out through informal discussions in the Security Council and informal consultations among the five permanent members, as well as through multilateral and bilateral dialogue among the parties involved in the settlement process, either directly or through mediators. It would be possible thus to formulate an understanding acceptable to all parties on the basic parameters for an international conference on the Middle East. However, that work must have a time-limit: it should be completed within six to nine months.

We must remember that at this stage we are talking about formulating a mechanism for a Middle East settlement, not about the actual parameters of such a settlement. But even at this stage we must resolve questions of principle. We believe these are the political and legal basis of the conference and Palestinian participation in it.

There are many possible ways of resolving the very specific problems involved in a settlement: There are many elements that could, if it is so desired, constitute a stable framework for a Middle East peace.

But the situation cannot continue any longer. No one has anything to gain from its perpetuation - neither Palestinians, Arabs, nor Israel. There is no alternative to reconciliation and settlement.

Israel's clinging to Arab territories occupied since 1967, the administration established there and the actions of the Israeli authorities in suppressing the Palestinians' political and civil freedoms will inevitably lead to Israel's isolation in the comity of nations and to a loss of support from even its most steadfast friends.

The question rightly arises of enacting sanctions against Israel, a country that has committed gross violations of civil rights. We must remember that the increasing militarization of the Middle East, together with the continuing explosive

(Mr. Oudovenko, Ukrainian SSR)

situation there, poses a threat not only to regional peace and security but to the peace and security of the world at large.

Thus the idea of an international conference on the Middle East is gaining ground steadily. We believe it should be implemented through joint efforts of the entire world community.

Let the blood of victims of the intifadah not have been shed in vain. The Security Council and the General Assembly must take urgent measures to terminate Israel's ruthless actions in the occupied territories and to protect the peaceful Palestinian population. In addition, practical steps must be taken to prepare for an international conference on the Middle East.

Mr. ZACHMANN (German Democratic Republic): Once again the General Assembly has to deal with the conflict in the Middle East, which has been going on for decades, with the question of Palestine at its core. It is with deep concern that world public opinion follows the further escalation of the oppressive acts by the occupying forces perpetrated against the Palestinian people, which leads to an exacerbation of tensions in the region as a whole. The distressing facts contained in the recent letters of the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the Secretary-General, and in the statement he made today, are eloquent proof of this. The German Democratic Republic agrees with all forces of peace, common sense and dialogue which call for an immediate end to those measures of violence. Allow me to quote in this context from the letter of Madame Absa Claude Diallo, Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, to the Secretary-General dated 14 April 1989 (A/43/1005):

"The Committee considers that the international community is duty-bound to redouble its efforts to ensure protection of the Palestinians under occupation and the withdrawal of Israel from the occupied territory ... The Committee also wishes to reiterate its most pressing appeal to you and to all parties concerned to further intensify all efforts towards the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 43/176 of 15 December 1988, which provides the only comprehensive, practical and overwhelmingly accepted framework for peace."

In this situation negotiations among equals conducted on the basis of United Nations resolutions, a result-oriented dialogue and joint efforts for ensuring a peaceful future for all States and peoples of the region are indeed called for more urgently than ever before. There must not be any more delay in convening the Middle East conference and thus in commencing the settlement process.

(Mr. Zachmann, German
Democratic Republic)

During the course of the forty-third session the vast majority of representatives noted that conditions were favourable for the solution of regional conflicts. Through its efforts to end the conflict between Iran and Iraq and bring about independence for Namibia, the United Nations has proved that, with a sense of realism and the readiness of all sides involved, even the most complex problems can be settled. This should apply no less to the Middle East conflict and the question of Palestine, because almost all United Nations Member States are in favour of convening a Middle East conference and of relevant activities by the Security Council. Preparatory measures should therefore be taken as quickly as possible by the Security Council, and especially its five permanent members.

The German Democratic Republic also supports the proposals submitted by the Soviet Foreign Minister concerning the appointment of a special representative of the Secretary-General for the Middle East and the preparation by the Security Council of recommendations for a Middle East conference. We equally welcome all steps taken by the Secretary-General aimed at convening such a conference.

The Palestinian people's uprising, which has been going on for more than a year now, has clearly and tragically shown that the Palestinian people can no longer be denied a life in peace and freedom. The German Democratic Republic backs any action geared to the implementation of the Palestinian people's inalienable rights, such as its rights to self-determination without external interference and to national independence and sovereignty. What is needed is the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Israel from all territories occupied since 1967, and the granting to all States of the region the right to independence and secure borders.

(Mr. Zachmann, German
Democratic Republic)

My delegation wishes to reaffirm here its unqualified solidarity with the heroic struggle the Palestinian people is waging to end the Israeli occupation and to establish an independent State. The German Democratic Republic will continue to do whatever it can to contribute towards achieving a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement of the Middle East conflict.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.