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President: Mr. Indalecio LIEVANO (Colombia).

In the absence of the President, Mr. de Piniés (Spain), Vice-President, took the Chair.

AGENDA ITEM 31

Question of Palestine: report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (*continued*)

1. Mr. RABETAFIKA (Madagascar) (*interpretation from French*): The general feeling that has prevailed during the debate on the question of Palestine is one of disappointment which it is difficult to overcome or to dissipate because of the confusion in international public opinion that is fostered by certain parties.

2. However, it is clear from the statements that have been made that no Member State has been categorically able to call into question Palestinian rights, whether they are called legitimate, national, inalienable or inalienable; whether they are qualified by conditions or reservations; or even whether they are denied by an aberration of the mind which finds no justification in international morality or legitimacy. All that basically matters little, as the Palestinian people are more than ever determined to assert those rights by all the means available to them and those who support them have undertaken clear commitments to that effect.

3. We can play with semantics, we can hide behind sterile and narrow legal arguments, we can argue over doubtful formulations and we can, it seems, seek a balance, which because it is academic is no less precarious. This does not change any of the basic facts of the problem, namely, that it is the right of the Palestinian people alone to define their rights, to recover them and to exercise them in whatever framework they will select; and that only the establishment of a democratic and secular Palestinian State as demanded by Chairman Yasser Arafat on 13 November 1974,¹ can set our minds at rest and put an end to the Palestinian question with which, unfortunately, we have had to live for three decades.

¹ See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-ninth Session, Plenary Meetings*, 2282nd meeting.

4. If it were otherwise, we should have to admit that vis-à-vis this disinherited people we were practising an outmoded paternalism—a paternalism which we must abandon if we believe that the Palestinians should not be sacrificed to games of power politics and interests that never reveal themselves.

5. But we shall be told that the United Nations has been asked on several occasions by various sectors to come to the assistance of the Palestinians.

6. Well, what exactly have we done for 31 years? Should we take pride in the fact that the United Nations has had to bow to unnamed pressures exercised by certain States and circles and deprive a people of its territory by obliging it to share that land with foreigners whose alleged historical title disregards those who have a far older and more authentic claim?

7. How can we explain, we who are so concerned about respect for human rights, that it took us 22 years even to pay lip-service to the right to self-determination of a people? Must we draw the conclusion that the Palestinians, and the Palestinians alone, deserve to have their human rights reduced to what is called today their “basic needs” and that international charity should suffice to bring them to reason and to maintain them submissive and grateful to the end of time?

8. Why do we continually refer to the frontiers of 1967—which, by the way, are not legal—and forget that in 1947, when the iniquitous partition of Palestine took place we only made a reference to a future delimitation? Can we allow this delimitation to remain the prerogative of one party without the assent of the other, and thus, under cover of *a posteriori* recognition, reward aggression and faits accomplis?

9. What follow-up action can we take on the recommendations of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People [*see A/33/35 and Corr.1/Rev.1, paras. 55-58*], when the Security Council is paralysed by a single veto and, despite requests from the General Assembly, consultations in the Council have not led to anything in the direction of the balanced and global solution advocated by the tutelary Powers which are accomplices?

10. Have we forgotten that the situation in the Middle East has its origin in the Palestinian question, and that to make the solution of the latter depend on a “just and lasting” solution in the whole area is really putting the cart before the horse and satisfies only a kind of false logic, which by dint of self-hypnosis, has become blind to reality?

11. Let us examine our consciences and admit that the Rapporteur of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People has said “nothing tangible has been done so far that gives the Palestinian people cause for great optimism” [59th meeting, para. 56.]

12. The exercise is dangerous for those who wish to reconcile the irreconcilable but is, in any case deadly for the Palestinian people, who must count on themselves alone, as the confidence that they had placed in the international community has been betrayed on more than one occasion.

13. It is regrettable to note that, despite our collective efforts, despite the dedication of the Secretary-General, despite the conscientious and objective undertaking by the Committee, under the leadership of its Chairman, Mr. Médoune Fall of Senegal, to whom I pay a special brotherly tribute, we have to make such bitter statements. It is difficult to get rid of certain prejudices, and, for some of us, those prejudices are fed by a deep guilt complex vis-à-vis the Jewish people.

14. For centuries that people suffered from discrimination and alienation in a so-called civilized European society. A home was found for them; the abusive establishment of a State was tolerated; and it was thought that they were freed from the physical and moral ghetto to which they had been condemned. But, instead of doing all this at home, it was desired to off-load all the problems arising from these acts of belated repentance on the Palestinians as if, by a transposition explainable by the egocentric nature of societies, the Palestinians had to be the new scapegoats, the rejects, in a world shaped by those who had never freed themselves from temptations to domination, oppression and exploitation.

15. The sufferings of the Palestinian people and the injustices to which they were subjected went for naught once one had performed the salutary act of contrition. We are at present witnessing a similar situation in Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa, in which those who have the rights have to bend before the demands of the usurpers and of those who claim to come from a superior civilization.

16. These are outmoded policies of another era, a time when triumphant colonialists were still able to dominate peoples according to their own interests. It is unthinkable that by devious means and by hollow declarations of principle, such policies should be given any semblance of justification.

17. Is it any surprise, then, that Israel, supported by those who have never rejected their colonial past, should indulge in the luxury of pursuing an even more repressive and backward kind of colonialism?

18. The acts of the Zionist authorities affecting the occupied territories and the future of their people remind us strangely of the reactions of the colonial Powers at the time when the national independence movements were emerging. They wish to control all that can be controlled, restrict whatever can be restricted, deny whatever can be denied, and repress whatever can be repressed—all in

flagrant disregard for international public opinion, since the only thing that matters to a colonial Power is its will to maintain and perpetuate its position.

19. It remains to be determined—although we know already—who is encouraging Israel in its policies. What interests are at stake which persuade people to follow the demons of colonialism and latent racism? I think those who have spoken before me have already given the answer: temporal Zionism is considered an essential element in the maintenance and promotion of imperialist capital. At any rate, the responsibility is still the same.

20. The Western conscience is apparently salved, according to its own principles—which are not necessarily ours—but to the detriment of a people who for some 50 years has had the misfortune to believe the promises of opportunists.

21. We are disarmed because that is the will of certain Powers. The United Nations is playing little more than a secondary role, despite the primary responsibility of the Security Council for the maintenance of international peace and security, which some States, such as Israel, confuse with their own security.

22. The Geneva Peace Conference on the Middle East, even though it was called for by a majority of States—and not the least among them—cannot be convened by reason of the diktat of a single party. And initiatives to change the appearance of the Palestinian problem are proliferating.

23. The Democratic Republic of Madagascar, for its part, reaffirms the three following principles.

24. First, the Palestine Liberation Organization [PLO] is the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, and, as such, has not only the absolute right but also the obligation to be the spokesman for the opinions and positions of the Palestinian people.

25. Secondly, the rights of the Palestinian people, as affirmed in United Nations resolutions, are non-negotiable.

26. Thirdly, we recognize that the Palestinians have the right and the duty to reject any solution, whatever its origin, that does not clearly recognize the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and the establishment of their own independent State.

27. So it all boils down to what is called the Palestinian entity, a *conditio sine qua non* for seeking a solution to the Middle East problem as a whole.

28. The matter remains controversial, since it depends upon the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, to whom we are so attached, as I indicated at the outset of my statement.

29. Although on 13 November 1974 President Yasser Arafat informed the General Assembly of his organization's intention to establish a democratic and secular State in Palestine, much has been done to give different interpretations to that statement to satisfy the requirements of certain alliances; to ensure, against all odds, secure and recognized borders for Israel; and to postpone, thereby, the evacuation of the occupied territories.

30. Paradoxically, was it not the Palestinian State to which the Zionist State owed its creation in 1947? Or, if it was not so, are we to abrogate General Assembly resolution 181 (II) and thus deny the existence of Israel? This leads us to an insoluble contradiction, because ultimately, while there is a readiness to tolerate the existence of the Palestinian people, they are not to be granted either rights or land.

31. The injustice and absurdity of that idea is so flagrant as not to deserve comment.

32. In conclusion, since we now know that the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People is subject to the political and constitutional limitations imposed upon it, we have the right to demand that all the injustices of which the Palestinian people have been the victim be denounced; that their legitimate struggle to free themselves from a neo-colonial situation should be recognized; that the so-called concerned Powers and the interests that are really involved should show greater objectivity and understanding; that political, military or partisan plots for which the Palestinians must pay the price should cease; that the necessary balance should be re-established between rights and obligations to guarantee the maintenance of true justice unfettered by the strategic requirements of a world in which freedom is measured in terms of an outmoded ideology; and that the Palestinian people should be given their rightful place so that they may in all dignity recover their freedom. That is the price of true peace and security in the area.

33. Mr. SULEIMAN (Oman) (*interpretation from Arabic*): May I first of all express my delegation's gratitude for the efforts of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. That Committee has understood the dimensions of the Palestinian problem; indeed, it has declared that the problem is at the heart of the Middle East crisis. We endorse the recommendations the Committee submitted to the General Assembly, which reaffirm, on the one hand, the impossibility of achieving a just and durable peace in the Middle East unless the Palestinian people can exercise their national, inalienable rights to return to their homeland and to enjoy self-determination; and, on the other, the need for the withdrawal of all Israeli troops from all occupied Arab territories, including Holy Jerusalem. My delegation wishes, in this connexion, to commend the efforts of the Chairman of the Committee, Mr. Fall, as well as the contribution made by Mr. Gauci, its Rapporteur, and to thank both of those gentlemen for the very valuable report that they have submitted to us today.

34. The Palestinian people, like all other peoples of the world, have a legitimate and inalienable right to independence and national sovereignty, and the United Nations has reaffirmed and recognized that right. That affirmation is not contained solely in General Assembly resolutions of recent years. It goes back over a period of 30 years to when the General Assembly adopted resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, which clearly and unequivocally provides for the right of the Palestinian Arab people to an independent State of Palestine to be established on an area of at least 46 per cent of the Palestine envisaged in the Mandate. But despite this, the fact remains that that

resolution, as is also the case with many other relevant resolutions emanating from this same body, has been consigned to the archives without being implemented. As we all know, Israel has, by force and terror, proceeded to annex additional territory in Palestine, and the total exceeds by far the area allotted to it by the United Nations.

35. Israeli greed has been revealed; the Zionist conspiracy has become even clearer; aggression has been stepped up and we have witnessed further annexation of land and the expulsion of the inhabitants, as well as the destruction of numerous peaceful villages—all this so that Israel may achieve its unlimited expansionist aims in establishing a Jewish State. This has now become evident to the international community, especially after the leaders of Israel clearly stated that they coveted all of Palestine, and even Territories beyond the boundaries of Mandated Palestine.

36. After four wars of aggression, Israel today occupies 64 per cent of the territory of Palestine and a large segment of Egyptian and Syrian territory as well. Israel has never concealed its intentions vis-à-vis the occupied Arab territories. It has promptly annexed Holy Jerusalem and tried to Judaize it, compelling this Organization and other international bodies to adopt numerous resolutions that denounce the legality of such expansionist Israeli practices, which are also in contradiction with the Charter of the United Nations and the international agreements applicable to armed conflicts.

37. Instead of complying with the international will, Israel has continued to flout international conventions and resolutions. Israel has continued to establish settlements, expel more Palestinians and imprison many Palestinians without investigation or trial, subjecting them to the most odious means of torture and herding them into concentration camps. Such practices have been condemned by the Commission on Human Rights and the International Commission of Jurists. In a press report published in Washington the day before yesterday, a group of American lawyers stated that Israeli violations in occupied Arab territories are aimed at annexing the West Bank and Gaza and linking them with the destiny of Israel.

38. Israeli leaders have themselves admitted that, in order to carry out its criminal expansionist plan, Israel has established 113 settlements since the war of June 1967, and another 51 settlements were established after the October 1973 war. That activity has continued and has extended to areas in the Golan Heights and Jerusalem, while today Israel pretends to seek peace.

39. Israel pursues a policy of colonization and of the establishment of settlements in order to Judaize the occupied territory and eliminate the Palestinian aspect of the Middle East question; the true intentions of Israel with regard to the aspirations of the Palestinian people are best revealed in the statement made by Moshe Dayan, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Israel, to *The New York Times* on 20 June 1978, and I quote:

“Arrangements for self-determination in the occupied Arab territories are not transitional but permanent and will not lead to the establishment of a free and independent State of Palestine.”

He says this despite all the numerous United Nations resolutions calling on Israel to withdraw from the occupied Arab territories and Jerusalem and to recognize the fundamental rights of the Palestinians, and despite international unanimity in condemning Israeli acts in the occupied territories. Those practices have been described even by the staunchest supporters of Israel as being illegal and contrary to efforts aimed at establishing peace. But Israel has continued to defy the international community.

40. Oman has constantly reaffirmed its respect for the fundamental principles on which a durable and just peace in the Middle East must be based, including the inadmissibility of the annexation of territory by force and respect for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to return and their right to self-determination in Palestine.

41. The entire international community agrees that the question of Palestine is at the heart of the Middle East problem and that the rights of the Palestinian people are inalienable and must be respected if peace in the Middle East is to be achieved. This year alone numerous resolutions have emanated from various international organizations and forums reaffirming those principles, including the resolutions of the Ninth Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, held in Dakar in April 1978 [see A/33/151, annex I], the resolutions of the Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity, held in Khartoum in July 1978 [A/33/235 and Corr.1, annex I]; and the resolutions of the Conference of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Non-Aligned Countries, held in Belgrade in July 1978 [A/33/206, annex III].

42. Israel must accept reality and cope with it; it cannot disregard the reality of the Palestinian problem. The right of that people is not inferior to that of any other people as regards freedom and self-determination, because there can be no just, equitable and lasting peace unless the justice of the Palestinian cause is recognized.

43. Peace in the Middle East cannot be just if it implies the elimination of the main interested party. We hope that the international community and the United Nations will implement fully all the relevant resolutions so as to establish peace and justice and avoid the dangers that threaten international peace and security, the dimensions of which we are all aware.

44. Mr. MAAMOURI (Tunisia) (*interpretation from Arabic*): Once more, during this session, we are considering a question that we all consider to be the greatest injustice of the century: that is, the question of occupied Palestine and the cause of a people which has been deprived of its rights and expelled from its land. At the close of each session of the General Assembly we hope that next year, at the next session, new horizons will be opened up and we shall be able to find a way out of the impasse, and there will be the necessary forward thrust towards a peaceful solution. But each time that we meet to discuss this and the results of the previous year's activities we find that we are caught in a vicious circle and see that the way forward is definitively blocked.

45. We say that because for three decades now the General Assembly of the United Nations and other international as

well as regional conferences have been discussing this matter. Voices have been raised and many resolutions have been adopted in favour of finding a just and equitable solution to this legitimate problem, the cause of the Palestinian people. The Palestinian people have been suffering for decades but, unfortunately, the resolutions have remained dead letters; they have not been implemented. That is not the fault of the Arabs and the Palestinians; it is Israel which has refused to implement the resolutions; it is Israel which has departed from the path of peace and justice.

46. If that were not the case, the Israeli leaders would have long since recognized that the Palestinian question is at the heart of the Middle East problem and they would have realized that one cannot go on living forever on the basis of a *fait accompli*.

47. At a time when the Middle East has once again become the focal-point of the world's concern and a center of interest to both its supporters and opponents, it may be relevant to reaffirm that real and lasting peace cannot be established in the region unless a just and comprehensive solution is found for the problem of Palestine. The problem of the Middle East is a single whole, inextricably inter-linked, and it cannot be broken down into bilateral contentions between Israel and each Arab country individually. Israel must recognize that fact and accept it.

48. The General Assembly has been affirming this fact since 1974 in various resolutions, particularly resolutions 3236 (XXIX) and 3376 (XXX). Those resolutions were supported by many countries, some of which were hesitant because of the pervasive biased Zionist publicity and because they did not place the conflict in its proper perspective, namely that of colonialist imperialism and the occupation of the territory of others by force.

49. The report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People has been submitted by its Chairman, Mr. Fall, who is well known for his wisdom, objectivity and intellectual honesty. We wish to thank Mr. Fall and all the other members of the Committee for the very valuable work they have done. In its report, the Committee states that there is indeed a Palestinian reality, whatever the Israeli authorities may think and however much they might wish to disregard the facts. The Palestinian people are not at all, as the Israeli leaders claim, a "handful of refugees" seeking food for their survival. The whole world has recognized that they have their own national identity and distinctive personality and they are trying to live in dignity, to recover their usurped land and their lawful rights, including the right to self-determination and to establish their independent, sovereign country, free from interference in their internal affairs.

50. There is no need to repeat here that the General Assembly since its thirty-first session approved and adopted the recommendations of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. We are therefore all involved in these recommendations and are responsible for seeing that they are implemented.

51. It is neither just nor realistic to assume for one moment that the Palestinian question can be settled

without the participation of the only genuine representative of the Palestinian people, the PLO, which has been recognized by the United Nations and other international bodies and by countries throughout the world. We have grown accustomed to the fact that colonialist régimes do not recognize the liberation movements, which represent the peoples struggling for their independence. We assert here that it is absolutely wrong for Israel to continue to ignore the PLO, the only body that can legitimately negotiate on behalf of the Palestinian people the fate and future of Palestine. We are convinced that peace cannot be established in the Middle East without the participation of that organization. Refusing to face that fact amounts to denying the rights of the Palestinian people, and denying their rights means refusing peace.

52. The United Nations has a direct historical responsibility in this matter. In 1947, it adopted its resolution on the partition of Palestine and the establishment of a Jewish State in Palestine. It is an irony of fate that Israel, the first country to owe its existence to the United Nations, is the only one that continues to reject the resolutions and recommendations, of the General Assembly and the Security Council, although those resolutions are only meant to restore the rights of the rightful owners of the land. Thus Israel defies the most basic principles of humanity and of the entire world community. It is time that Israel recognized that obstinacy will get it nowhere.

53. The events in the Middle East prove that expansionist policies, the establishment of settlements on the territory of others and the concealment of the real nature of the problem, the oppression of the Palestinian people, the refusal to recognize the PLO, will not serve Israel's interests. Four wars have not given—and will not give—Israel stability and security. Four wars have not guaranteed—and will not guarantee—the success of Israel's plans. This myth of secure borders means nothing, no matter what Israel repeatedly says on the matter, for peace cannot be based on oppression, usurpation and aggression.

54. There is no need to recall here that "time is not on the side of peace" in the Middle East. A lot of time has been wasted on destruction, bloodshed and the loss of innocent lives. All this has been a result of Israel's refusal to recognize the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people. I very much fear the effects of any further delay, for that will mean maintaining the Palestinian people in a state of oppression and the Middle East in a state of tension which could lead to an explosion at any moment, threatening the peace and security not only of the region but of the whole world.

55. It is clear that Israel must recognize that although the Palestinian State does not yet exist; for reasons with which we are all familiar, the Palestine people do exist; they are there; they have been alive and well for centuries. The history of the Palestinian people proves their unshakeable will. Despite all the wars and attempts to eliminate them, they continue to struggle bravely, heroically, to regain their natural and legitimate rights.

56. We hope that the struggle they are conducting today to recover their usurped land will be transferred to the negotiating table under the leadership of their representa-

tive, the PLO. If Israel truly wants peace and security, it must agree to negotiate with the PLO and must understand that the PLO is the sole genuine representative of the Palestinian people.

57. It is high time for our Organization to adopt the position required by existing conditions and compel Israel to respect the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law, in order that there may be a just and lasting peace. They must respect the freedom of all the people in the region and, most particularly, the rights of the Palestinian people so that that people may live in peace and dignity. As regards the PLO and Arab countries in general, they have many times expressed their desire to establish peace and stability and to negotiate on an equal footing to seek a just and lasting solution. They have shown flexibility and understanding of the facts and of the real situation, and they do not seek war and aggression. Their efforts have all been directed towards reconstruction.

58. Political activity should begin with total withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories and the guarantee of all the rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to return to their homeland, the right to self-determination and the right to establish their independent State, which should lead us to recognize the right of the PLO to exercise and play to the full its role on the international political scene. This is a principle which Israel—sooner or later—should accept and understand. To refuse that principle means to delay the attainment of peace. Experience has shown that terror, violence and other methods to which recourse has been had to solve this problem have produced no tangible results. It is possible to try to establish a just and lasting peace without recourse to war. We must try therefore to see to it that this question no longer remains at a dead end.

59. We must recognize that this demands a new approach, a fresh impulse, a greater leap forward. But this can only be achieved if there is a general convergence of will and, particularly, if Israel faces the facts.

60. Tunisia respects the principle of flexibility in its approach to this problem, and the conviction that it is our right and duty to stand at the side of the Palestinian and other Arab peoples and support them in their just and heroic struggle. That is Tunisia's attitude, and our Minister for Foreign Affairs said this in his statement before the General Assembly on 9 October last [27th meeting]. He confirmed Tunisia's support for the Palestinians and its understanding of the underlying facts of the problem. He confirmed that there could be no peace in the area which was not a general peace, based on the following principles: first, the recognition of the inalienable rights—of—the Palestinian people, including their right to return to their homeland, to self-determination and to establish an independent State; secondly, participation in peace negotiations by the PLO, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, on an equal footing with all the other interested parties; and, thirdly, the inadmissibility of the annexation and occupation of territory by force, which means that Israel must withdraw completely and unconditionally from all occupied territories.

61. Such is our vision of a just and lasting peace; such is our vision of a peace that would be to the detriment of no party.

62. We hope that goodwill may prevail and that all human and material resources will be devoted to the service of development and civilization in the interests of mankind as a whole.

63. In celebrating the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, our great hope was that the next time we celebrate that Day we shall also be celebrating the independence of the Palestinian people and the reign of the spirit of brotherhood and harmony in the Middle East.

64. Mr. SINCLAIR (Guyana): For the delegation of Guyana it was very appropriate that the General Assembly should have resumed, in 1974, substantive consideration of the question of Palestine. In taking such a step, the Assembly gave recognition that was long overdue to the fact that it had to address itself directly to the issue of Palestine if any meaningful progress towards a final Middle East settlement were to be made. An important and timely shift in perspective had therefore been made in relation to the previous approach of the Assembly—of viewing the Palestinian question as the human rights aspect of the Middle East question rather than as the political core of the question.

65. This correct analysis of the Middle East question created the right conditions under which the Assembly could take such initiatives as would facilitate the search for a lasting peace in the Middle East. In this regard, a significant development was the establishment by the Assembly in 1975 of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. This Committee was assigned the responsibility of drafting a programme of implementation that would enable the Palestinian people to exercise their inalienable right to self-determination without external interference, the right to national independence and sovereignty and to return to their homes and property from which they had been driven.

66. Two years ago the Committee submitted recommendations providing for an Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories by 1 June 1977, and a phased plan for the return of Palestinians to their homes [see A/33/35, annex]. The recommendations laid down a positive programme of action and were based on United Nations resolutions, thus providing the Organization with an opportunity of making real progress towards the elusive goal of an over-all Middle East peace settlement. Regrettably, although those recommendations had been endorsed by the General Assembly, as they were again last year, opposition in the Security Council has stalled their implementation. The Committee has, in its report this year, resubmitted its recommendations, justifiably describing their solidity as “undiminished by the passage of time” [A/33/35, para. 55] My delegation shares this point of view. We also agree with the Committee’s position that: “events over the past year have again indicated the urgency of a solution” [ibid.] and that, had a start been made on the implementation of the recommendations, conflict in the area might have been avoided.

67. My delegation wishes to pay a tribute to the Committee on the excellent work it has been doing under the wise and dedicated chairmanship of Ambassador Fall. It has played an important role in focusing the attention of the

international community on the rights of the Palestinian people. By its diligence and impartiality it has done much to foster a greater understanding and an increased awareness of the injustices which the Palestinian people have suffered, and of the ways and means of redressing those injustices as quickly as possible.

68. Two days ago this Organization held for the first time a special meeting to commemorate the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. On that occasion we paid a tribute to the courage, steadfastness and resilience of the people who, despite years of indifference and neglect, are now recognized as a principal party in the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. It was fitting, then, that my Foreign Minister should underline the centrality of the Palestinians to efforts for the achievement of such a settlement when, in his message to the Committee, he said:

“Over the years, Guyana has consistently maintained that at the heart of any search for a just, lasting and comprehensive solution to the complex Middle East situation lies the Palestinian question: i.e., the recovery by the Palestinians of their inalienable national rights.”

69. While we recognize the central role of the Palestinians in the search for a Middle East peace, we must once more mention that they are only part of the prescription that enjoys almost universal recognition as the basis for a comprehensive Middle East peace settlement. This prescription consists of three principles, which were reiterated by my Foreign Minister in his address to this Assembly on 5 October last. They are:

“... Israeli withdrawal from all Arab lands occupied since 5 June 1967; the restoration of the national rights of ... the Palestinian people, including their right to a homeland; and the right of all States in the area to live within mutually recognized boundaries.” [23rd meeting, para. 191.]

70. But these principles will be of no value in terms of ushering in an era of lasting peace and stability in the area unless they are strictly and scrupulously observed by all concerned, and in this context a special responsibility rests with Israel, which this Assembly has condemned on so many occasions for its continued disregard of the purposes and principles of the Charter and of the provisions of Assembly resolutions having as their aim the establishment of a secure peace based on the principles just expounded—among them, I repeat for emphasis, the restoration of the national rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to a homeland.

71. The Special Political Committee has recently concluded consideration of two very important aspects of the Middle East question which bear directly upon the question of Palestine: UNRWA and the report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories [A/33/356]. These debates have served to draw attention once again to the intransigent obstructionist attitude on the part of the Israeli authorities and to reaffirm the concern which the international community feels at the consequent endangering of the chances of peace in the region.

72. In the aftermath of the creation of the State of Israel the Palestinian people suffered one of the greatest injustices that history has ever recorded. Callously uprooted from the land of their birth, the experience of the Palestinians has been that of a people dispersed and dispossessed, the story of a nation without a home, of a proud people reduced to recipients of international charity. While the degree of suffering that the Palestinians have experienced can never be over-emphasized, there is, the very real danger that the annual ritual of debate on the Palestinian problem might, from habit, make us less sensitive to the truly tragic dimensions of the Palestinian ordeal; and that our resolutions, because they have traditionally gone unobserved by those in a position to implement them or to ensure their implementation, might lull us into the complacent acceptance of mere procedure instead of meaningful action. My delegation would like to urge a renewed consciousness of the reality of the injustice perpetrated against the Palestinians. They are the hapless victims of a situation not of their own making, and indeed, one for which this Organization must bear considerable responsibility. Our goal must be to accelerate movement towards a solution that will fulfil the just expectations of the Palestinian people for the righting of the wrong that was so cruelly inflicted upon them. For, in the final analysis, it is the fate of the Palestinian people and not of the Palestinian question by which the value of our solutions or our approaches to solutions will be measured.

73. My delegation would like to reiterate our continuing support for the people of Palestine under the leadership of their authentic representative, the PLO, in their just struggle for the recovery of their national rights. We expect that whatever decision results from these deliberations will maintain the people of Palestine in the very forefront of our preoccupation and draw us that much closer to the peace which we all long for in that region. As has been observed on so many occasions, time is not on the side of peace in the Middle East.

74. Mr. AKIMAN (Turkey): The Palestine problem, which in our view is the core of the Middle East issue, was inherited by our Organization as early as 1947, that is to say, during the first years of the existence of this Organization, through the adoption of General Assembly resolution 181 (II), which sought the creation of two States in Palestine.

75. Since then, the tragic plight of the valiant people of Palestine has endured, on the one hand, and their resolute efforts to achieve self-determination have continued for more than 30 years, on the other. The Palestinian problem, in spite of the many important developments towards the international recognition of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, still remains an incessant source of suffering and wrongs. There can certainly be no durable peace in the Middle East without justice, and justice requires the recognition and exercise of the national rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to self-determination and to establish a State of their own.

76. After many years, during which the issue of Palestine was considered exclusively within the context of a refugee problem, its basic political dimension has finally been admitted and defined in various resolutions by the General

Assembly. An overwhelming majority of the international community supports the legitimate rights of the Arab people of Palestine, including their right to establish an independent State.

77. General Assembly resolution 3236 (XXIX) is of historic importance in this regard. This resolution, while confirming the rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to return to their homes, emphasizes at the same time that the Palestinian people are one of the main parties directly concerned in the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. The General Assembly elaborated further on this question and, in its resolution 3375 (XXX), decided to invite the PLO, as the sole representative of the Palestinian people, to participate in all international efforts relating to the Middle East on an equal footing with the other parties concerned. Turkey supported these resolutions. Our support in this regard has been based on the universal recognition of the right to self-determination and on our respect for the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

78. With a view to translating into action the provisions of those resolutions and in order to draw up a programme for the implementation of the Palestinian rights enumerated in General Assembly resolution 3236 (XXIX), the General Assembly established the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. Turkey is pleased to be a constituent member of that Committee and to contribute to the valuable efforts undertaken by it to ensure the achievement of the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people. That Committee has already recommended a programme, which was endorsed by the General Assembly in 1976 and 1977 during its last two regular sessions.

79. In spite of the difficulties encountered in the implementation of the Committee's recommendations, already endorsed by the General Assembly, we believe that those recommendations have made a significant impact in focusing attention on the necessity of a just settlement of the Palestinian issue. It was in this context that the General Assembly decided last year, by its resolution 32/40 B, on a programme for the observance, for the first time, of an International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, which we commemorated only a few days ago at a solemn meeting of the Committee. This occasion provided another opportunity for focusing the attention of the international community on the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and giving the widest possible publicity to the facts relating to those rights. This occasion also provided further evidence of the reaffirmation of international recognition of the fact that the Palestinian problem is indeed the essence of the Middle East question and that the solution of one without the solution of the other is not possible.

80. As has been stated on several previous occasions in different organs of this Organization by the Turkish delegation, and as was also declared in the message addressed by my Foreign Minister, Mr. Ökçün, to the Chairman of the Committee, Turkey firmly believes that a just and lasting settlement of the Middle East question can be found only by taking into consideration the legitimate rights of the Palestinian Arab people, including, I repeat, their right to decide their own future and to have their own homeland.

81. I should like to seize this opportunity to pay a tribute to Mr. Fall of Senegal, the Chairman of the Committee, for his untiring and constructive efforts in carrying out his most important and delicate task, as well as for the eloquent manner in which he explained to this Assembly [59th meeting] the highlights of the report of the Committee and the difficulties encountered in the implementation of its recommendations. I should also like to commend here the praiseworthy work done by Mr. Gauci of Malta, the Rapporteur of the Committee. As a member of the Committee I should like to associate my delegation with the report of the Committee, which emphasizes the importance and urgency of the implementation of its recommendations.

82. I should also like to add here, however, that a constructive conclusion of the debate on this question in the General Assembly should constitute an important contribution to the search for a comprehensive solution to the Middle East problem.

83. The Turkish Government's view regarding the principles and fundamentals of a just and lasting solution in the Middle East has been most recently expressed by my Minister for Foreign Affairs in his statement at a plenary meeting of the present session of the General Assembly [19th meeting]. I should like to conclude my remarks on this question by repeating those principles once again.

84. In our view, a political settlement in the Middle East should be based on the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force. It must end the occupation of all Arab territories, including Jerusalem, which Israel has maintained since 1967. It must take into account the legitimate and inalienable national rights of the Palestinians, including their right to establish a State of their own. It must safeguard the independence, sovereignty and security of the recognized frontiers of all the countries in the region. Furthermore, the PLO, the only legitimate representative of the people of Palestine, must participate, on an equal footing with the other parties concerned, in any negotiations for a just and lasting settlement in the Middle East. Turkey will continue to support and welcome any peace initiative which conforms to the foregoing principles.

85. Mr. STEPHANIDES (Cyprus): Addressing the General Assembly on 5 October 1978, the President of the Republic of Cyprus, Mr. Spyros Kyprianou, stated in regard to the problems of the Middle East and Palestine the following:

"With regard to the very sensitive region of the Middle East, we reiterate our firm support for the objective of a just and lasting settlement of all aspects of the Middle East conflict within the framework of the relevant United Nations resolutions. The Palestine Liberation Organization should fully participate in the efforts aimed at a solution based on the United Nations resolutions and on the establishment of a Palestinian homeland, as well as on recognition of the rights of all States in the region to exist in peace and within recognized boundaries." [22nd meeting, para. 26.]

Mr. Liévano (Colombia) took the Chair.

86. On 29 November, in a message to the Secretary-General of our Organization, the President of Cyprus stated the following:

"On the occasion of the observance of 29 November as the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, I wish to underline the necessity for the application of the relevant United Nations resolutions, which can ensure peace and stability in this sensitive area of the world. I would like to add that it is imperative that the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people should be thoroughly respected. Cyprus will continue to play its modest role in this question."

87. The Assembly has before it the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. As one of its members Cyprus fully supports the Committee's recommendations. I take this opportunity to add a word of praise for the Chairman of the Committee, the representative of Senegal, Mr. Fall, for the outstanding leadership he continues to provide in the Committee.

88. The sad history of the question of Palestine is well known to everybody in this Assembly, therefore I need not deal with this aspect of the problem. I would only add that, on the basis of the historical record, the conclusion is inescapably drawn, as the representative of India has already stated earlier in this debate, that:

"...until the goal of independence is achieved, the United Nations remains the trustee of the rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to self-determination and to a nation-State of their own." [62nd meeting, para. 107.]

89. Today, despite repeated United Nations resolutions, the situation on the ground continues to be one of illegal occupation of Arab lands, with the uprooted Palestinian refugees still prevented from returning to their ancestral homes and lands occupied since the 1967 war and from exercising their inalienable right to self-determination and independence.

90. Furthermore, we are witnessing in the occupied Arab lands the practice, in contemptuous disregard of the relevant United Nations resolutions, of a policy of establishing illegal settlements as abhorrent in its contravention of international law as that practised by the aggressor in the invaded areas of my country. It is a sinister pursuit aimed at changing by force the age-old demographic composition of the occupied areas.

91. That is the situation, and the immediate question arising is this: under international law and the norms of the Charter of this Organization, could the passage of time make the continuing occupation of somebody else's land less objectionable? If the answer is in the affirmative, it would seem to me that we would then immediately contravene and negate the Charter and the principles on which the whole edifice of this Organization is founded. If the reply is in the negative, then, again, it would seem to me that we—and in particular the Security Council—will have no justification for any more tolerance or reluctance to act expeditiously with a view to putting an end to such illegal occupation and the practices as I have just referred to.

92. There can be no doubt that the interests of all members of the Security Council, indeed of all States

Members of this Organization, are better served in the long term by the scrupulous application of all relevant provisions of the Charter in the joint pursuit of the establishment of genuine and lasting peace based on justice for all parties concerned.

93. Before concluding, I wish to associate my delegation with the remarks of the Rapporteur of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, Mr. Gauci, to the effect that

“...unless the rights of the Palestinian people are safeguarded, permanent peace and security for all States and peoples in the Middle East will not be achieved.”
[59th meeting, para. 70.]

94. It is our fervent hope that this year effective action will be taken towards a just solution of the Palestinian problem in the interests of advancing the cause of international peace and security.

95. Mr. OYONO (United Republic of Cameroon) (*interpretation from French*): Is it a coincidence that the debate of the policy of *apartheid* of the South African Government has been followed by a debate on the question of Palestine? For my delegation, this fact is quite significant and not at all fortuitous. The question of *apartheid* like that of Palestine reveals the timelessness of resistance, of the noble and sacred struggle of peoples deprived of their inalienable rights, among them those to existence and to homeland, waged throughout history and all over the world against oppressors up to the day of final victory and the recovery of their dignity.

96. In both cases brotherhood in oppression, strong because of the same complicities, is constantly being strengthened, made more specific, developing in the economic, military and nuclear fields, and expressing itself with the same arrogance and scorn about United Nations resolutions.

97. Again in both cases the situation results from the tensions in the region which constitute a grave threat to international peace and security.

98. The question of Palestine now before the General Assembly, together with that of *apartheid*, is one of those questions which have so preoccupied the United Nations since 1947 as to give rise to searching questions as to the capacity of the United Nations to fulfil the great hopes which its creation aroused in all peoples struggling against all forms of domination and oppression.

99. For more than 30 years the decolonization process in southern Africa has been blocked by the action of certain interests that confirm the racists of Pretoria in their misguided stubbornness. Despite a few break-throughs the same is true of the situation in the Middle East, which is also blocked for virtually the same reasons.

100. There is nothing more impressive than the number of debates which the General Assembly and the Security Council have devoted to this question and there is nothing more impressive than the number of decisions and resolutions adopted outlining sketches of partial or global

solutions, some appropriate, some less so, but all reflecting the perennial concern of the United Nations in its lengthy and difficult quest for a lasting and just settlement of the question of Palestine.

101. As we know, this question goes back a long way. On the other hand, what is new and most important politically is the readjustment in the thinking and the conduct of Governments in respect of the current approach to the problems involved in bringing peace to the Middle East. The General Assembly took a wise and realistic decision to place that problem not on the periphery but at the very heart of any process aimed at establishing a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

102. It is high time for that readjustment, and it is understandably surprising that this was not realized earlier, as it would have made the debate a lot more illuminating as the question of Palestine is at the root of the very dangerous situation that has prevailed in the Middle East for over 30 years and that underlies the conflagrations that exist there.

103. It is with great interest, therefore, that my delegation studied the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, so well chaired by my colleague and friend, Médoune Fall, the ambassador of Senegal. I should like to take this opportunity to express my admiration for the competence and devotion with which he has discharged his very delicate and responsible duties.

104. This report, published in document A/33/35 and Corr.1/Rev.1 is a realistic, balanced and clear document because, with a view to the settlement of the problem of Palestine, it lists all the elements for a just and peaceful and hence lasting settlement of the Middle East problem.

105. I should like to emphasize that the activities and recommendations of the Committee contained in its report are very relevant and germane and are in full accord with the terms of reference of the Committee as laid down in General Assembly resolution 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975 and resolution 32/40 A dated 2 December 1977. We believe that the General Assembly should approve this document, thus encouraging the Committee to forge ahead in the mission entrusted to it, to act in such a way that the people of Palestine may finally exercise all their inalienable rights.

106. As I said earlier, the question before the Assembly is a long-standing one. The position of Cameroon in this regard is well known as it has been stated on numerous occasions from this rostrum and in other international forums. The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cameroon, Mr. Jean Keutcha, stated the following:

“The Palestinian problem is the very core of the Israeli-Arab conflict and, in addition to the complete implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), the solution of that problem implies the participation in all negotiations on the subject of the Palestinian people, under the leadership of the PLO, their genuine representative, and the exercise of all their rights, including their right to a homeland.” [18th meeting, para. 172.]

107. We have reiterated our position in order to affirm once again the great significance that Cameroon attaches to the question of Palestine and the problem of establishing peace in the Middle East which, as we have already stated, to be lasting should first and foremost be just. That implies the full implementation of all provisions of the Security Council resolutions I have mentioned and specifically the withdrawal of Israel from all Arab territories occupied since 1967; the right of all States of the region, including Israel, to live within secure and recognized boundaries; and the exercise by the Palestinian people, led by its genuine representative, the PLO, of all their inalienable and inalienable rights, including their right to a homeland in an Arab Palestine.

108. That also implies the effective participation of the PLO as a directly interested party in any process for the peaceful settlement of the Middle East problem.

109. Cameroon holds that such a settlement must incorporate all these cardinal principles if an era of peace and co-operation is to reign in that region, which in the space of less than three decades has been beset by three most deadly and devastating wars.

110. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from Spanish*): I call now on the representative of the PLO, who wishes to speak in response to some of the statements made here.

111. Mr. AQL (Palestine Liberation Organization): My delegation feels authorized by the overwhelming majority of this august body, which was subjected yesterday to a harangue by the Israeli representative, to say a few words.

112. Usurping this platform to pose as a lecturer in international morality, the Israeli representative had both the audacity and the temerity to pass on the dictum of a Zionist, racist credo to this Assembly and its Members, both individually and collectively. That dictum did not condemn any particular resolution adopted by this Assembly, or any specific aspect of its work: it rather encompassed the totality of the Assembly's work, its resolutions and recommendations and even the modalities it has so far adopted on the Palestine problem.

113. A State like the State of Israel, which was founded on violence, and continues to live by violence, cannot by its nature bring itself to come to terms with the international consensus on the Palestine problem as expressed and reaffirmed by the General Assembly. It is therefore only natural that the Israeli representative should defy and even try to distort the work of this august body, although the State he represents, whatever legitimacy it claims, was created by a resolution of this same body.

114. Nevertheless, his statement yesterday [*65th meeting*] was not without an element of humour. The representative of Menachem Begin, the terrorist *par excellence* whimsically chose to dwell at length on what he termed the "terrorism" of the PLO. Suffice it to mention, in this connexion, that State-sponsored terrorism, which is inherent in the very ideology of Zionism, is qualitatively different from the violence unfortunately imposed on our movement, as well as on every liberation movement in history.

115. However, what is comforting in this regard is that the heroic struggle of our freedom fighters is having a telling effect on our Zionist adversaries, similar to the effect that all liberation movements have had on colonial occupation and racist Powers.

116. As for the statement of the United States representative [*65th meeting*], my delegation would like to make the following observations: first, there was nothing new that one could discern in that statement, except for a rhetorical acknowledgement of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people. The attempt to circumvent the centrality of the Palestine problem and the representativeness of the PLO is an exercise in futility. Secondly, the statement adopted the Israeli view that the deliberations and resolutions of this Assembly are ideological and emotional. United States policy, therefore, continues to ignore the basis on which a just settlement of the Palestine problem could be reached, disregarding the wishes and resolutions of the overwhelming majority of this Assembly. Thirdly, the United States position on the Palestine problem continues to emanate from a strict adherence, in letter and spirit, to the annexes to the second Sinai Agreement,² whereby the United States Government undertook to co-ordinate its policies on the Palestine problem with the Israeli Government, thus enabling the Israelis to exercise a veto power in this respect. Fourthly, although there has been no change in the antagonistic American attitude towards our inalienable rights, which this Assembly upholds and recognizes, we admit there has been a noticeable improvement in the drafting of the United States position. Simultaneously, the PLO, as well as the large majority in this hall, has improved its detecting abilities which will protect us from the euphoria, the sloganeering and the false hopes which the United States Government promises to fulfil.

The meeting rose at 12.30 p.m.

² See *Official Records of the Security Council, Thirtieth Year, Supplement for July, August and September 1975*, documents S/11818 and Add.1-4; and *ibid.*, *Supplement for October, November and December 1975*, document S/11818/Add.5.